

*World Heritage Series*

# ELEPHANTA



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA



# ELEPHANTA

Elephanta brought out by the Archaeological Survey of India introduces the visitors to one of the finest rock-cut temples of India, now declared a World Heritage monument.

The Elephanta caves are situated in a small island of great scenic beauty which was witness to history for over two thousand years. Buddhists have erected stupas here in the second century BC, and the caves were carved by Hindus in the sixth century AD. They are dedicated to God Siva, a most important divinity of the Hindu pantheon whose cult 'Saivism' was spread far and wide into the country and even beyond its frontiers.

The caves are embellished with elegant sculptures, gigantic in proportion, and narrating some of the Puranic stories associated with Siva. They are carved in deep recesses and are characterised by tremendous force and vitality. The central figures, a three headed bust of the God is amongst the finest creations of the Indian genius.

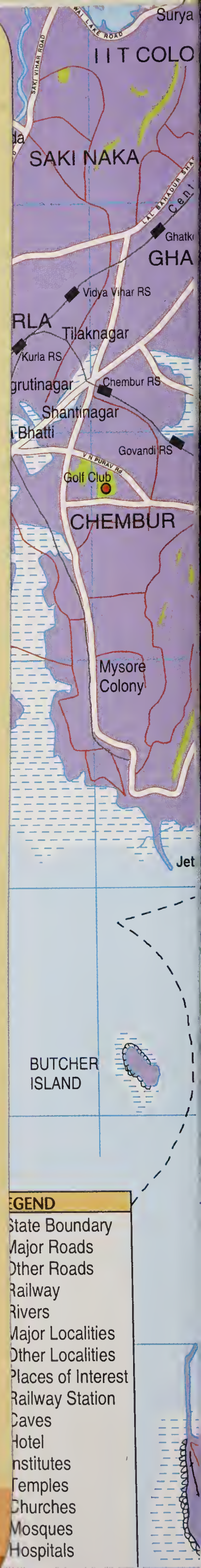
The caves are situated in close proximity to the metropolis of Mumbai. With a comfortable ferry constantly available, except during the monsoon from June to September, visit to the site makes a memorable trip.

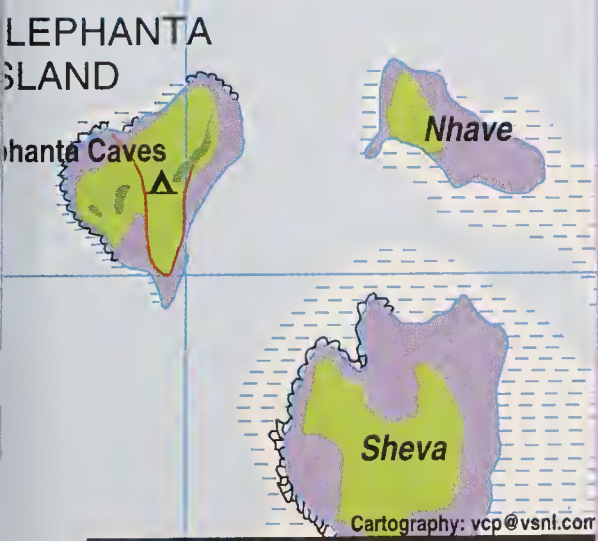
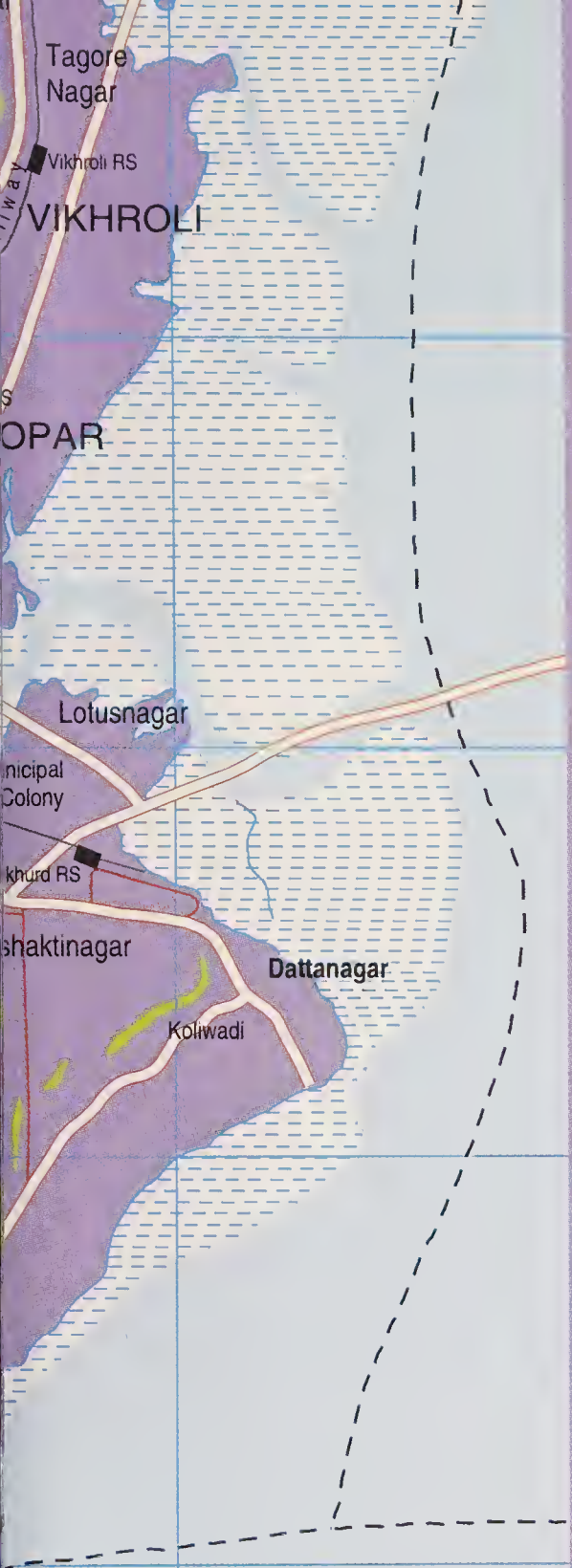
Also included is information on ancient monuments in the city of Mumbai and its environs.

This short guide book has been profusely illustrated with coloured photographs and gives all the essential information for the common tourist. For those who are interested in greater details, a bibliography has been appended.

Practical information on hotels, ferry service, and visas is also given.

Entry Fee  
\$5 or Rs. 250 for foreigners  
Rs. 10 for Indians  
Still Photography free  
Video Photography Rs. 25

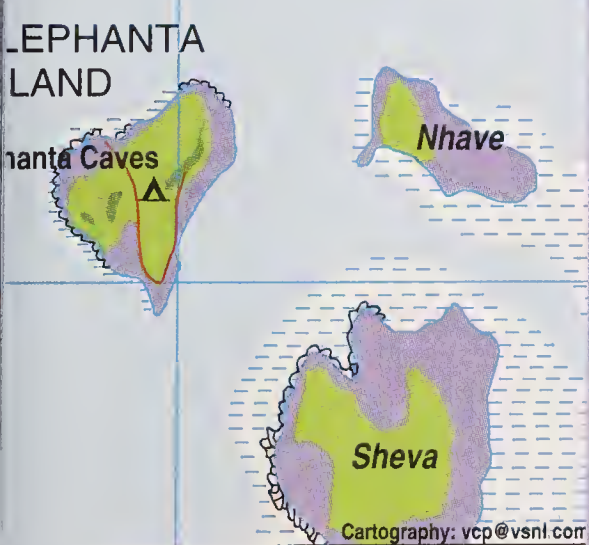
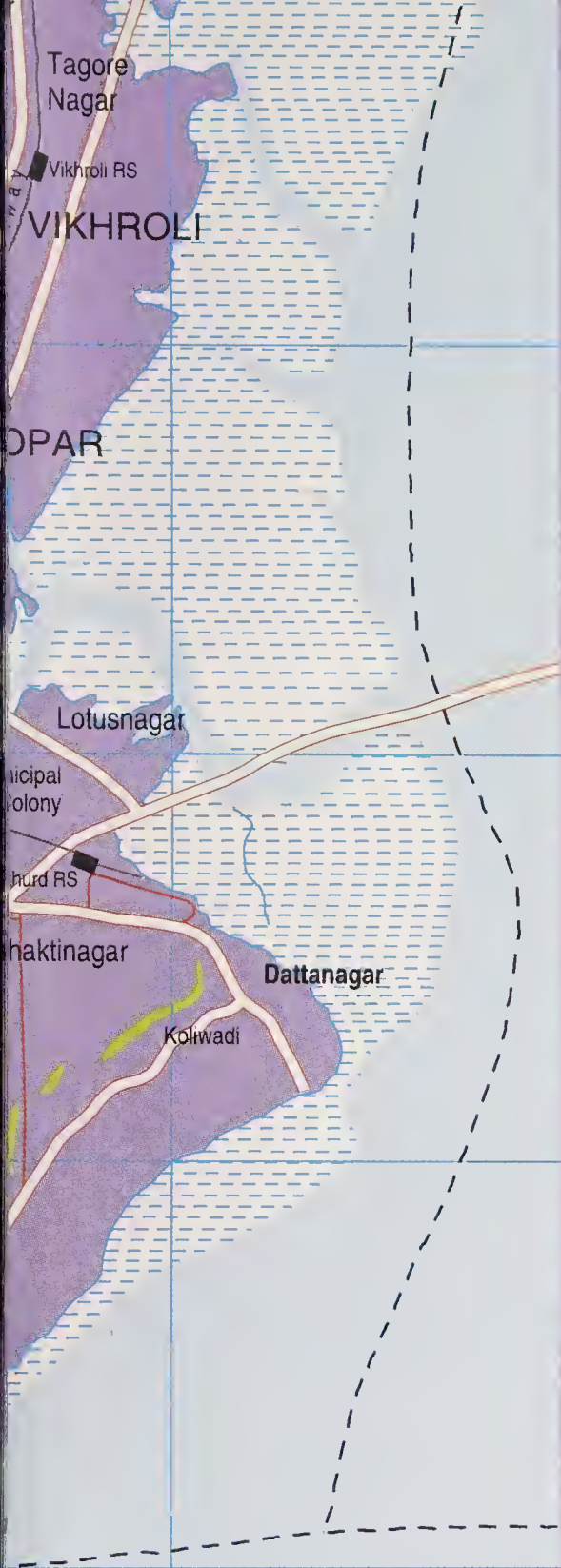

















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*World Heritage Series*

# ELEPHANTA

**M.K. Dhavalikar**



प्रत्कीर्तिम्पावृणु

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# Foreword

The rock-cut caves on the Elephanta island, close to the metropolis of Mumbai, constitute a most priceless heritage of humanity. Of the seven excavations at the site, only one cave (No.1) is profusely adorned with exquisitely carved gigantic sculptures, dominated by the Trimurti colossus testifying to the superb skill of the ancient Indian artist. The caves, which were excavated in the mid-sixth century during the rule of the Konkan Mauryas, are dedicated to god Siva, an important member of the Hindu triad.

The island, locally known as Gharapuri, was named Elephanta during the medieval times because of a huge stone statue of an elephant standing at the entry point of the island; it was later removed to the city of Mumbai. The Portuguese tried to destroy it but with little success; they, however, succeeded in mutilating the sculptured panels, more particularly their lower half. Still they do not fail to impress the visitor by their sheer monumentality and superior aesthetic quality.

I hope the visiting tourist will appreciate the beauty of the caves in the scenic surroundings.

Director General  
Archaeological Survey of India



# Introduction



*On the island of Elephanta.  
An aquatint by Thomas Daniell and  
nephew William Daniell, landscape  
artists who visited India in 1786.  
Their splendid aquatints have  
remained an important source of  
the outside world's image of India.*

The island of Elephanta (18° 58' N, 72° 58' E) is located about 11 km to the east of the Apollo Bunder and Gateway of India of Mumbai from where launches leave for the island which is quite small, measuring about 2 sq km. Locally known as Gharapuri, the island was named Elephanta because of a huge stone statue of an elephant which stood near Raj





Bunder, one of the entry points to the island. Attempts were made by the Portuguese to destroy it, but they do not seem to have been successful, some fragments of it, however, were broken. They were shifted to Mumbai and joined together. Presently the statue stands in the precincts of the Bhau Daji Lad Museum at Byculla, a suburb of Mumbai, which is located

in the Jijamata Udyan (formerly known as Queen Victoria Garden). It is a huge statue, 4.5 m in length and 2.4 m in height.

There is still a small village known as Gharapuri on the island which is identified with ancient Puri, the capital of the Mauryas of Konkan who ruled here in the sixth and seventh century AD.





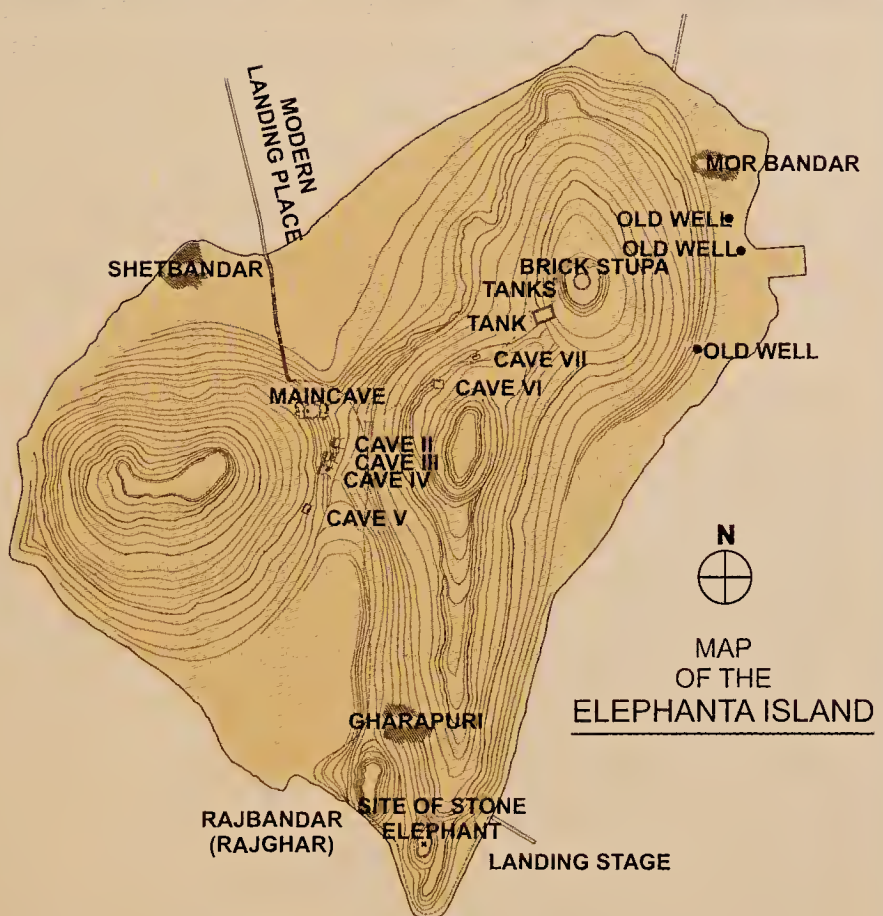
*Jetty*

Puri appears to be the same as Śrīpurī which is referred to in the Aihole inscription of the Chalukyan monarch Pulakeśin II who ruled in the first half of the seventh century AD. It is interesting to note that the name Śrīpurī also occurs in an inscription engraved on a copper vessel which was recovered during the clearance of the cistern in the west wing of Main Cave; it is dated AD 1068.

There are three entry

points to the island *viz.* the Mora Bunder, probably named after the Mauryas, the Raj Bunder (also known as Rajpuri), the site of the stone statue of the elephant which gave the name to the island; and may have been the landing place for the rulers; and Sethia Bunder which may have been used by merchants and traders in the ancient past. Presently, however, the ferry takes the visitors to the New Jetty from where it is a short walk to the Main Cave.









The island is dominated by a low hill, or rather two hills with a ravine dividing them, and their height above the mean sea level is about 200 m. They are thickly wooded by palms, tamarind, mango and other trees, and the coast line, of about 7 km, is fringed by mangrove swamps. There are traces of ancient habitation on the island of a very early period as is evident from the remains of a Buddhist stūpa which can be assigned to about second century BC; it is surrounded by smaller ones which may be votive stūpas. Remains of fortification have also been noticed. The habitation seems to have continued even later in the tenth and eleventh century AD if the presence of Hero stones is any indication. It is reported that there was also a statue of horse on the island but its whereabouts are not known. An inscribed slab found here is said to have been taken to Portugal, which scholars in recent years have

tried to find but it is untraceable. It would certainly have thrown a welcome light on the caves, more particularly their patronage and date. Some loose sculptures were picked up in the vicinity of the caves and were presented to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum in Mumbai. Besides, a carnelian seal was also reported but nothing is known about it.

There are seven rock-cut caves at the site of which the most important is the Main Cave (No. 1), the remaining do not contain anything of interest and some of them are unfinished. The Main Cave is one of the finest monuments of its kind and is full of exquisitely sculptured panels which, though damaged beyond repair, still do not fail to impress the visitor. They testify to the superb skill of the ancient Indian artist.



The most convenient season for visiting the caves is winter months from November to March, and even summer is not intolerable provided one is prepared to face the coastal humid climate, but during the rainy season from June to September everything almost comes to a standstill because of the heavy rainfall and the launch service is also suspended.

The caves are open on all days, except Monday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Launches are available for visiting the island from 9 a.m. from Gateway of India and the last boat leaves at 4 p.m., and from Elephanta at 5.00 p.m. There is a miniature train for going from the pier to the foot of the hill where the caves are located.







*Main Cave (No. 1)*

Maharashtra was a part of the Mauryan empire as is evident from Asoka's edict at Sopara (ancient *Śūrpāraka*), which is now a suburb of Mumbai, where there are also the remains of a Buddhist stupa which was originally built by the emperor himself in the third century BC. After the decline of the Mauryas, the Sātavāhanas ruled over





the Deccan from about BC 200 - AD 200 when all the early Buddhist cave temples of Western India were excavated. Later the Vākātakas, who were matrimonially related to the Imperial Guptas of north India, were dominant. The magnificent group of the Mahayana caves at Ajanta were excavated during their

reign. They were followed by the Vishṇukunḍins for a time who probably were driven out by the Kalachuris of Central India who ruled from Māhishmati, (present Maheshwar, M.P.) in the sixth century AD. They were great devotees of Śiva and were the followers of the Pāśupata cult which was founded by Lakulīśa who lived at



Kāyāvarohaṇa (present Karwan, Gujarat) in the second century AD. His images have been carved in the Jogeshwari cave in Mumbai as also at Ellora (Dumar Lena) but the identification of those at Elephanta is doubtful. It deserves a special mention that sometime back hundreds of copper coins of King Krishṇarāja were found at Elephanta.

The Main Cave at Elephanta has been generally assigned to the seventh century whereas some maintained that it is a typical Vākāṭaka-Gupta product of the fifth century. However, the general opinion now favours a date in the mid-sixth century during the rule of the Konkan Mauryas. They were not related to the Imperial Mauryas of north India of the fourth and third century BC, but were probably vassals of the Kalachuris and later of the Western Chālukyas as is evident from the Meguti temple inscription at Aihole of Pulakesin II dated AD 634. It states that Puri was besieged by the Chalukyan monarch “with hundreds of ships”, indicating that the place is none else than Gharapuri. Moreover, the record refers to it as “The Goddess of Fortune of the

Western Sea”, leaving no doubt about its identification. It was referred to in the eleventh century as Śrīpurī during the rule of the Śilāhāras, and later in the medieval times as Puri. More important is the reference in Pulakeśin's record that his father Kīrtivarman, who ruled from AD 567 to 598, had also conquered Konkan.

There are thus different views assigning the cave from the fifth to the eighth century AD but in the absence of any documentary evidence, the issue cannot be settled. What appears likely was that the island played an important role in trade and commerce, and in all likelihood the merchants-traders may have been the patrons of the cave during the rule of the Konkan Mauryas. Like most of the cave temples in Maharashtra, it was probably a cooperative enterprise in which each contributes what he can of his own free will. Stylistically, however, the cave can be assigned to the middle of the sixth century AD.

The island continued to be occupied later although there is no epigraphical evidence for it. It is reported that there was a large inscribed stone on the island near the cave, which was later taken to Portugal by the Portuguese



viceroy Dom Joao de Castro in 1540 for decipherment but what happened to it is not known. Recent inquiries have revealed that it is not traceable in Portugal. Dom Castro found the caves so impressive that he could not believe that it was the work of human hands, and therefore it was thought that it must have been done by demons (*asuras*). All over Maharashtra which has hundreds of rock-cut cave temples, people generally believe that they were carved by the Pandavas, the heroes of the *Mahābhārata*, during their exile in the remote past.

Although many European visitors were impressed by the colossal sculptures at Elephanta, the Portuguese rulers did their best to destroy them. It has been recorded by many European visitors, including Portuguese, that not only soldiers but Portuguese authorities were also responsible for damaging the caves by breaking sculptures and defacing them. This explains why the lower portions of the panels have been totally destroyed, hands

broken and faces mutilated. Even later, under the British, the situation did not improve much.

The island of Elephanta was not transferred to the British in 1668 although the islands comprising the present metropolis of Mumbai were handed over to them by the Portuguese, and it continued to be under their rule. The Trimurti bust was almost intact upto 1865, when attempts were made to disfigure it. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, was given a banquet in the cave in 1875 and from 1890 the Public Works Department of Bombay began to take conservation measures to improve the miserable condition of the cave. The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act was passed in 1904, and the caves were declared as a protected monument in 1909. After Independence, the condition of the caves has considerably improved. Presently they are in an excellent state and have been declared as a World Heritage Site in 1987.







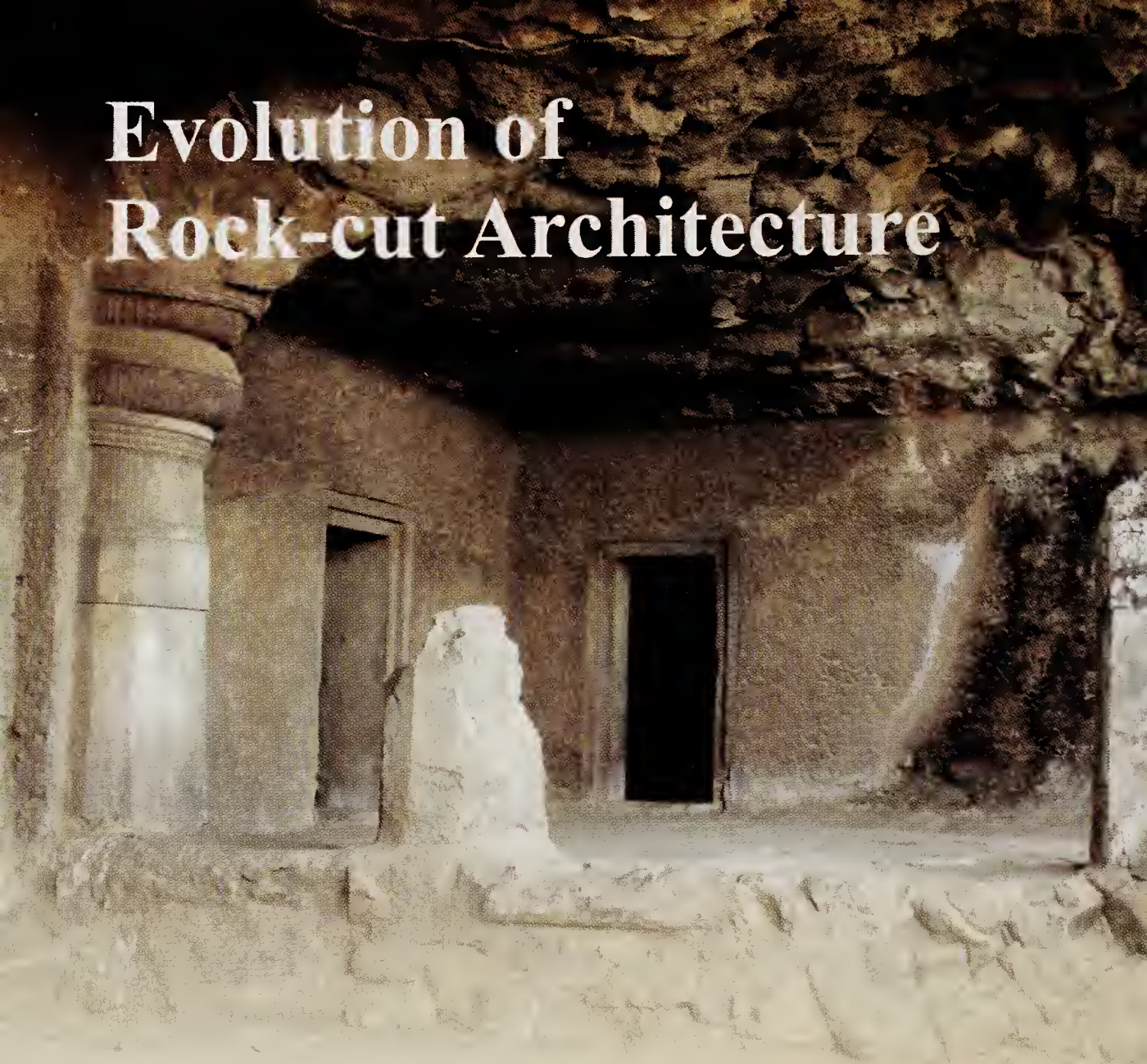
*Entrance of the great cave temple of Elephanta  
by British landscape artist Robert Melville Grindlay  
an exceptionally talented amateur artist.  
His superb aquatints were published in 1826.*







# Evolution of Rock-cut Architecture



Rock-cut architecture is a distinctive feature of ancient Indian art, more particularly that of Maharashtra where, of about 1500 rock-cut caves, some 1200 are located. For a millennium and half, from the second century BC to the thirteenth century AD, the Sahyadris and its hill ranges were humming with the activity of stone cutters, and the temples which they have hewn out of the solid rock are truly architectural marvels. This art idiom was practiced all over the world, but it flourished nowhere else as in India as Indian artists far surpassed their counterparts in their skill.

The rock-cut activity started in Maharashtra in the early

second century BC but still earlier caves were excavated in north India in Bihar in the third century BC. There are seven rock-cut caves, four in the Barabar and three in the Nagarjuni hills which are located 19 km north of Gaya. Some of them were donated by Aśoka (BC 272 - 232 ) to the ascetics of the Ājīvika sect. They are almost exact copies of wooden architecture.

In Maharashtra the rock-cut activity can be broadly divided into three phases viz. the Buddhist (BC 200 - AD 600), Hindu (AD 600 - 1000) and Jaina (AD 9th - 12th century ). Of the 1500 or so rock cut caves, nearly 1000 are Buddhist, 300 Hindu and





200 Jaina. The trap rock of the Sahyadri ranges is very suitable for carving and hence a large number of caves came to be excavated here.

The Buddhist caves are of two different types : the *chaitya*, which was the shrine, and the *vihāra*, which served as the residence of monks. But the Hindu and the Jaina caves are only shrines of their divinities. Although structural temples of the Hindus were being built in the second century BC, which were apsidal on plan like the Buddhist *chaitya-grihas*, a new plan was introduced in the fourth- fifth century AD. It essentially consisted of a squarish sanctum sanctorum (*garbha-griha*) with a portico

at the front, to which the circumambulatory path (*pradakshinā-patha*) was added slightly later.

In Maharashtra, since there was a strong tradition of excavating rock temples, the Hindus followed the Buddhists. The earliest Hindu rock-cut shrine is in Mumbai itself. The Jogeshvari cave is believed to be the first Hindu cave temple which introduces a new plan. It consists of a large squarish hall, with a square shrine in the centre, surrounded by massive pillars, and has a colonnaded portico. The sanctum has four doors on all four sides, like the structural Hindu temples of the early period. The cave can be assigned to the first half of the sixth century AD.

The main cave at Elephanta, which can be placed in the middle of the sixth century, marks a further stage of development. Here the shrine is not in the centre of the hall, but in the back half of it, along the major axis. It has entrances on three sides, except in the south, and the rows of pillars divide the hall into transepts. It resembles in all essential details the arrangement in the Dumar Lena at Ellora (Cave 29) which is slightly later.



# The Main Cave



*Interior of the Main Cave*

The main cave at Elephanta is among the most impressive Hindu temples in India. It consists of a large squarish hall (39 m sq) with its longer axis in the roughly east-west direction. The colossal bust of Śiva, the presiding deity, is carved in the southern wall. The main entrance seems to be that on the north which faces the sea, and it is from





here that the huge bust in the south wall can be seen. All the three entrances admit a flood of light in the hall where large sculptured panels have been carved. The principal figures are larger than life and are marked by forceful gestures and postures. The hall is divided into five bays by five rows of massive pillars which are

squarish in the lower half, and have a cylindrical fluted upper part crowned by a fluted cushion capital. Exactly similar pillars are to be seen in the Dumar Lena at Ellora. The hall is approached by a flight of steps leading to a portico in the north beyond which is a vestibule which forms part of the hall, set apart by pillars.









In the east and west, the flights of steps straight lead into the hall, There is a similar vestibule (*antarāla*) before the shrine containing the three-headed bust, the so called Trimurti.

The squarish shrine in the western half of the hall has entrance doorways on all four sides which are flanked by giant guardians (*dvārapālas*). The shrine contains a Śiva-*linga* on a squarish platform. In the open court before the eastern entrance, there is a circular mark on the floor which obviously seems to be the place where Nandi, Śiva's mount, was placed; it has since vanished.

As already observed, the cave is almost identical with Dumar Lena of Ellora (cave No. 29) so far as its plan, the style of pillars and their disposition as also the sculptured panels are concerned, but the latter lacks the elegance and refined quality as also the dynamism and subtlety of Elephanta; even its spiritual quality is missing. In fact Elephanta can be said to be superior to all others of its class. But it is a little smaller than the Dumar Lena possibly because of the configuration of the terrain in which the cave is excavated.





*Main Cave, interior*

The hall is divided into five trancepts by rows of pillars and consists of thirty- six squares, each measuring 5.5 m sq. This arrangement is supposed to correspond to the *maṇḍalas* or symbolic diagrams representing the Universe which play an

important role in the sacred architecture of the Hindus and is said to be auspicious.

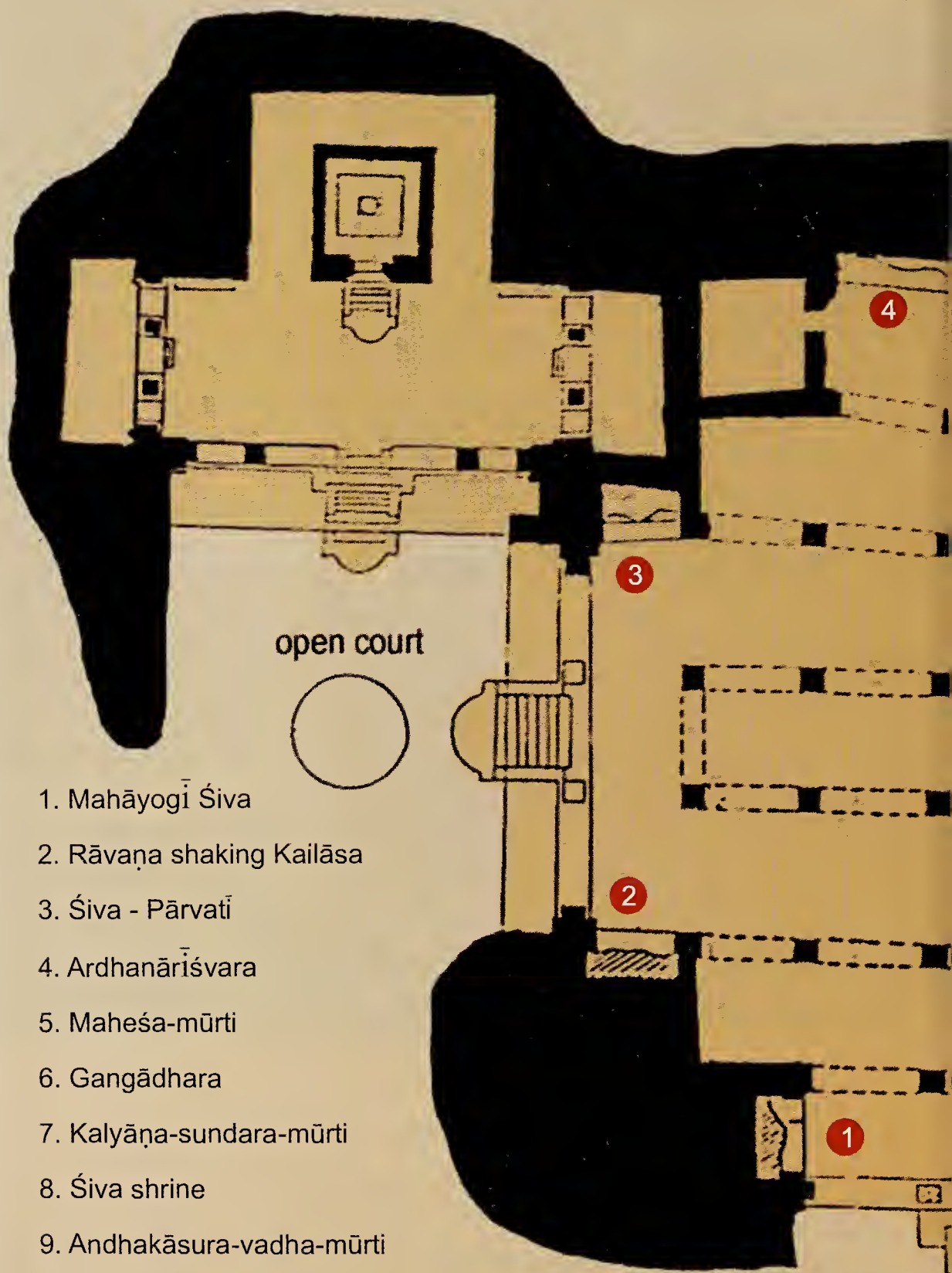
The hall is quite spacious and the available wall space has been used by the artists very intelligently. The themes have been selected with great care and have been executed





in huge panels which are most impressive not only because of their beauty but their very size. The cave therefore looks like a mysterious cavern from the depth of which emerge gods and goddesses. They are carved in bold relief and appear almost like statues.

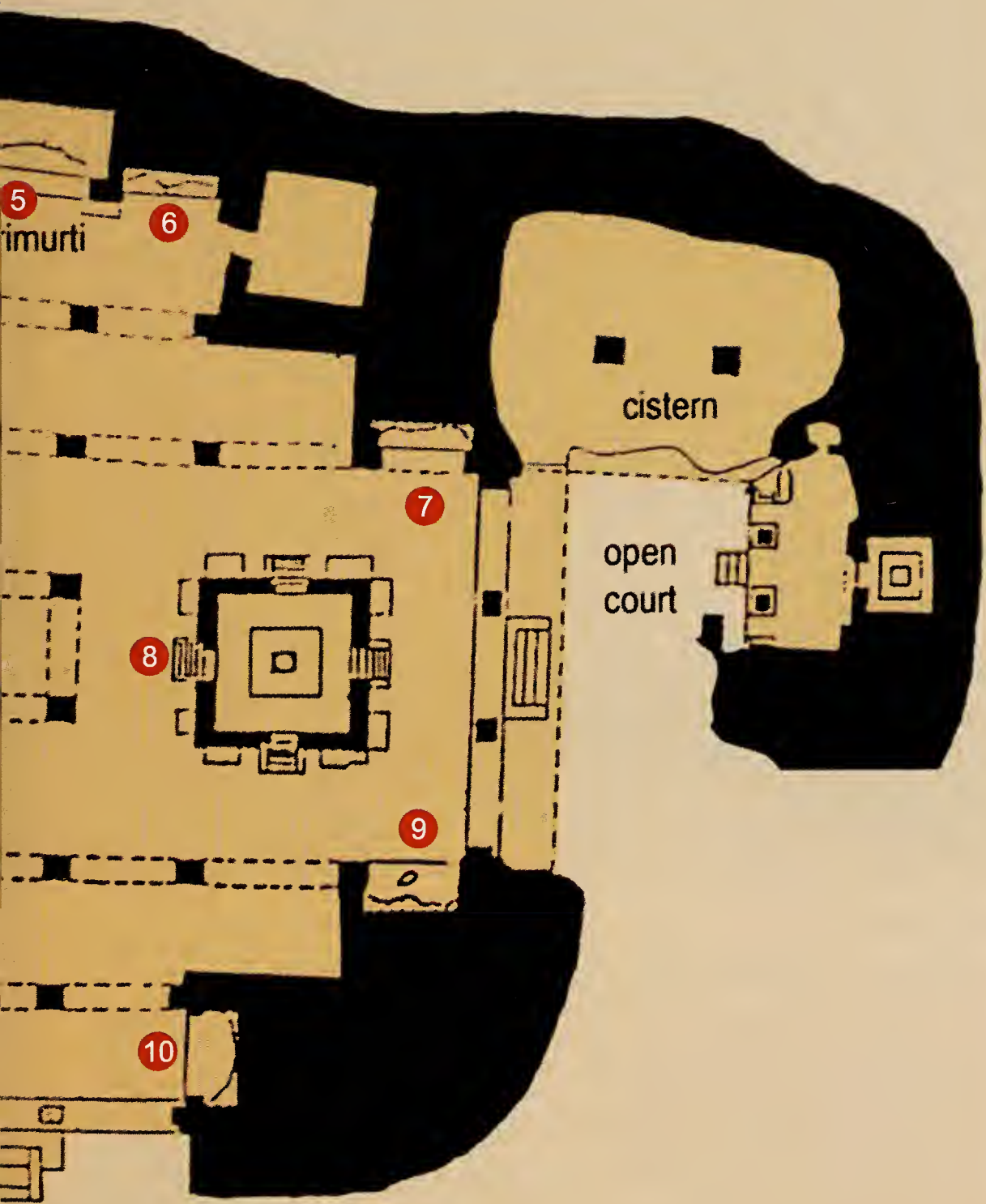




1. Mahāyogī Śiva
2. Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa
3. Śiva - Pārvatī
4. Ardhanārīśvara
5. Maheśa-mūrti
6. Gangādhara
7. Kalyāṇa-sundara-mūrti
8. Śiva shrine
9. Andhakāśura-vadha-mūrti
10. Naṭarāja Śiva

Elephanta Caves  
Plan of Cave No. 1  
Scale 1 : 600









*Śiva as Mahayogi*

## 1. Śiva as Mahāyogī or Lakulīśa

On entering the cave through the northern portico we see on the left wall of the hall a controversial panel in which the god is seated in *padmāsana*, the yogic posture, on a lotus, the stalk of which is held by two *nāga* figures. He wears the *jaṭāmukuta* like that of Śiva which has a prominent crest at the front. The face has lost all

its relief features, and both the arms are broken from the shoulder. The figures on his right are totally destroyed whereas those on the left are mutilated; flying figures are seen above. In the upper right corner one can make out Brahma on swan, Indra on elephant and Viṣṇu on eagle (*garuḍa*).

The seated figure, according





to some, represents Lakulīśa, as there is an exactly identical panel at Ellora (Cave 29). He was an ardent devotee of Śiva and a historical personality who lived in the second century AD. He was an inhabitant of Karwan (ancient Kāyāvarohaṇa) in Gujarat and was intimately associated with the development of the *Pāśupata* cult of the Śaivas; in fact he is supposed to be the founder of the cult. He is said to be the twenty-eighth s

incarnation of Śiva and is credited with systematising the *Pāśupata* creed. He had four disciples viz. Kushika, Mitra, Garga and Kaurushya who are traditionally regarded as the expounders of the four sub-sects of the *Pāśupata* system. In sculptural representations he is shown seated in the yogic posture and holds a club (*laguḍa*, *lakula*) in his hand, hence his name Lakulīśa.

The identification of the image as Lakulīśa has been questioned as it seems to represent Śiva as *Mahāyogī*. Śiva was the supreme master of Yoga, and is *Yogīśvara*. In the panel he is shown seated in the yogic posture, in deep meditation with contemplative expression on his face. There are gods on his sides and celestial figures above. He also has a halo at the back. Although the hands are broken, it is highly likely that they were resting on his knees. This is possible because there is an image of Śiva as *Mahāyogī* in the west wing in which both the hands are seen, though somewhat damaged. He does not hold a *laguḍa* and is therefore not Lakulīśa. The figure in the Main Cave may also be that of Śiva as *Yogīśvara*. It answers to the description of Śiva in Kālidāsa's epic *Kumārasambhava* of the fourth century AD.



## 2. Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa

Rāvaṇa, the demon king of Lanka, was a great devotee of Śiva, but was very proud of his prowess. His grandfather, Paulastya, had taught him to adore Śiva and perform penance. Once he was returning after defeating Kubera, the god of wealth, in his plane named Pushpaka. On way he came to Sharavana, the place where Kārttikeya, Śiva's elder son, was born. Here Rāvaṇa's plane could not move further. He met the monkey faced dwarf, one of Śiva's *gaṇas*, Nandikeśvara, who told him that Śiva and Pārvatī were sporting on the mountain and nobody, even gods, were allowed to cross it. This angered Rāvaṇa, who ridiculed Nandikeśvara who was none else but a form of Śiva; he cursed the demon that he would be destroyed by monkeys like himself. That is how he finally met his end. Rāvaṇa then decided to uproot the Kailāsa mountain. He began to lift it with his hands and started shaking it. Pārvatī, who was seated by the side of Śiva, was frightened and her maids and other attendants started running in panic.

Śiva was unperturbed, he just pressed his toe and



Ravana shaking Kailasa







Rāvaṇa was about to be crushed. Rāvaṇa then propitiates Śiva, who is pleased, presents him a sword at his request and is then allowed to go. He is given the name Rāvaṇa because he cried.

In the north-east corner is a huge panel depicting Rāvaṇa shaking Kailāsa mountain, a favourite Śaivite theme. It shows the demon king in the lower half which is completely destroyed. He is lifting the mountain, or rather uprooting it, Śiva is seated with his right leg folded and the left lifted. He had eight hands but only two have survived; the right resting on a cushion and the left on the left knee, but stretched, possibly indicating that Pārvatī and others should not panic. He wears a fine *jaṭā-mukuta* and some jewellery. His third eye, symbolizing his superior knowledge, is clearly seen. His torso is most proportionate and graceful. The female figure on his right is Pārvatī; but she is badly mutilated. There are many figures flanking the god, his attendants and votaries, while flying figures are hovering above. This is probably the most crowded panel at Elephanta. One can make out the sage Bhringī, whose skeleton is on the left as also Gaṇeśa, whereas there is

Vishnu on *garuḍa* on right. Excellent panels, almost identical, have been carved at Ellora in Cave 16 (*Kailāsa*) and 21 (Dumar Lena).

### 3. Śiva-Pārvatī

The panel in the south-east corner of the hall portrays Śiva-Pārvatī seated on a high platform on the base of which a number of figures were carved but they are now totally lost. What one can make out from the rough outline is a bull - Śiva's mount Nandi- with some figures on either side. Usually in such *Umā-Maheśa-mūrti* panels, dwarfs - Śiva's *gaṇas*- are depicted frolicking, some playing with Nandi, as is evident from similar panels at Ellora in Cave Nos. 21 (Ramesvara) and 29 (Dumar Lena). But this is the most damaged panel at Elephanta wherein no details can be made out. Śiva is seen seated with his right leg slightly raised up; his four hands are all broken, and the face is completely mutilated; only the halo at the back is intact. Pārvatī is no better; she is seated with her right leg folded and the left hanging down. Both of them wear adequate jewellery. Śiva has his attendants and devotees on his right and Pārvatī her maids on her left while flying figures are seen hovering in





*Siva - Parvati*

the sky. In-between Śiva and Pārvatī is a maid standing with a child who may be Kārttikeya, their elder son. Another maid, standing, appears holding what looks like Gaṇeśa.

The panel has generally been taken to represent Pārvatī in the attitude of

*māna*, that is in a somewhat affectionate but angry mood. She has slightly turned her face towards left, but the action is not clear as the hands are broken. There is an exactly identical panel in Cave 21 (Ramesvara) at Ellora which has survived in its pristine glory with all





*Parvati and her maid, flying figures*





details intact. It depicts Śiva and Pārvatī playing *chausar* or dice and Pārvatī seems to have suspected that while playing, her lord is cheating her and in consequence she is angry and has turned her face towards left slightly. Her right hand is raised in such a manner as to show that she is aware that Śiva is not playing fair. In the Ellora panel even the dice board is seen clearly, but at Elephanta that portion is completely destroyed. Considering the striking identity between the two panels, one can say with reasonable amount of certitude that the Elephanta panel too depicts Śiva Pārvatī playing chausar or dice.

#### 4. Ardhanārīśvara Śiva

In the back wall, to the right of the colossal bust, is carved the panel showing Śiva as *Ardhanārīśvara*, i.e. the half male and half female form of the god. The story goes that Śiva was once seated with Pārvatī on the Kailāsa mountain when many sages came to pay their respects to the god. But Bhiringī, a sage, did not join them because he had vowed that he will not bow before anyone except Śiva. This made Pārvatī angry and wanted to reduce the sage to a mere skeleton of bones. This happens and since the sage, thus a bundle



of bones, could not stand properly, Śiva gives him a third leg as he cannot bear his plight. Bhringī is very happy and dances with three legs and praises Śiva for his favour. This makes Pārvatī angry and she therefore performs a penance so that

she is merged with Śiva's body. Her wish is granted and she becomes part of Śiva. This is the *ardhanārī* form of Śiva. We are further told that Bhringī assumed the form of a beetle, pierced a hole through Śiva's body and performed circumambulation

*Ardhanarisvara*





(*pradakṣhiṇā*) around the male form only. Pārvatī is then convinced of the sage's steadfastness and admires him.

This *Ardhanārīśvara* is perhaps the most refined representation of its class as we witness in it a wonderfully balanced rhythm so difficult

to achieve. Its left half is that of female and the right, that of male. The portion of the body below the waist is destroyed. He is four-armed, the two left hands, that of the female part, hold a mirror in the upper left, while the lower left is resting on the waist, probably holding the tuft of the lower garment.





The female half, representing Pārvatī, wears an elaborate crown, necklaces, armlets, bangles and a broad girdle; her breast is also shown. She has in addition a *tilaka* mark on the forehead and her eyes are half closed and the face is calm and composed. The *ardhanārīśvara* form represents the ultimate concept of the union of male and female.

*Mahesa-murti*

Śiva, represented by the right half, has his bull (*nandi*) to his right, on which his right hand rests, while in his rear left hand is a cobra. The main central figure is surrounded on all sides by different Hindu divinities and devotees. On Śiva's right is Viṣṇu on *garuḍa*, Brahmā on swans, Varuṇa on crocodile (*makara*), Indra on Airāvata, and Kārttikeya with a spear in





his right hand, besides attendants such as fly whisk bearers.

There is another Puranic story about the androgynous form of Śiva which provides the explanation. According to it, Brahmā, one of the Trinity whose task was creation, produced creatures but they could not procreate as there were no female forms. He requested Śiva to help who

then assumed the form which is half male and half female in one body. They made sexual union possible and procreation resulted. This is how Śiva is the god of creation also.

## 5. Maheśa-mūrti

The three headed bust of Śiva, identified as Maheśa or Mahādeva or Sadāśiva is among the finest creations of







*Mahesa-murti*

the Indian genius. It is carved in the back wall or the south wall, exactly opposite the main entrance to the cave on the north. One is simply overwhelmed by the colossal bust, 5.45 m in height, on a 1 m high platform. The sculpture is generally mistaken to represent the Trimurti, the Hindu triad of Śiva, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the three most important divinities of the Hindu pantheon, but on closer study it becomes clear that it

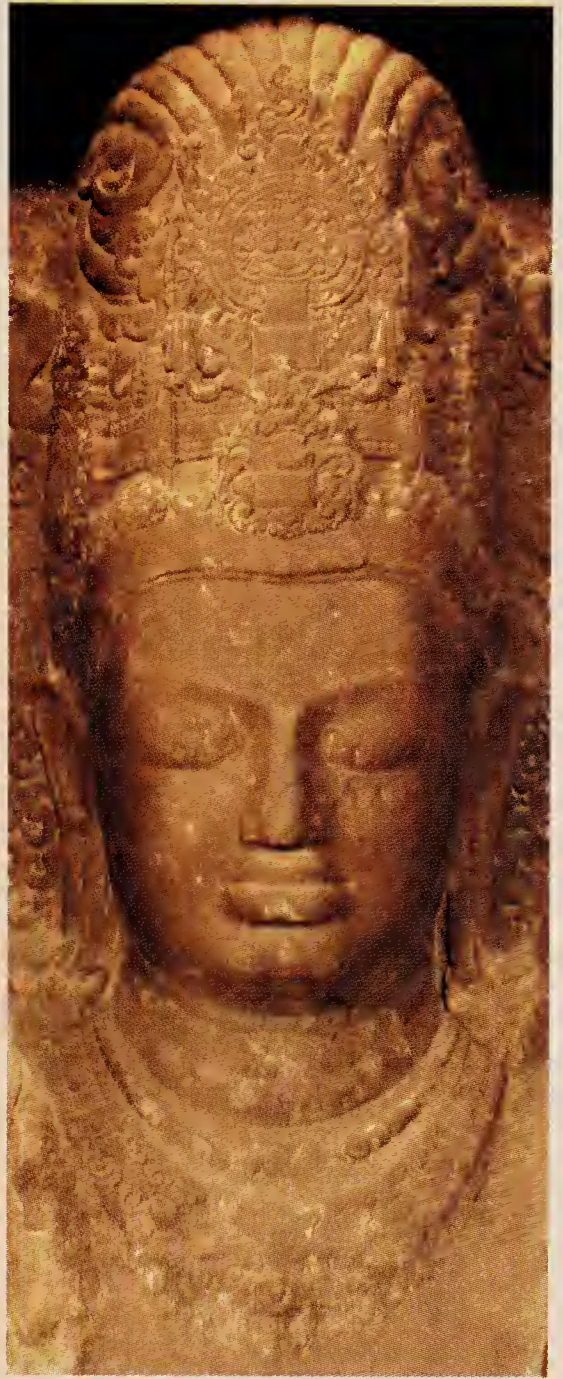
represents the three different forms of Śiva. His facial expression is calm and serene and the image exudes an aura of mystery as it is carved in a deep recess; hence the overall effect is overwhelming.

Of the three heads of the god, the central one is characterized by benign expression, with half closed eyes in deep meditation or in trance. He wears *jaṭā-mukuta* with a crest at the front and jewelled necklaces, viz. a



single string of pearls (*ekāvalī*) and an elaborately gem studded necklace adorned with pearl festoons and pendants. The ear ornaments too are jewelled and have pearl pendants. They resemble the form of a crocodile and can therefore be identified as the *makara-kunḍalas*. There is a thick bangle or a bracelet on the right hand which holds a *matulunga* or *bīja-pūraka* (citrus) fruit. The right hand is broken but must have held a rosary.

The delineation of the physiognomy of the god deserves special attention. Although it is marred by cracks here and there which were caused during the colonial rule the sculpture is awe inspiring. The artist has succeeded in delineating the serene expression. Since the



*Tatpurusha*

image is carved in a deep recess, one feels that it is emerging from great depth and this has lent it an amazing majesty, which heightens the total effect. This central head of the god has been identified as representing the Tatpurusha aspect.

The right face of the god - left for the visitor - represents Aghora or Bhairava or Rudra which is his 'destroyer' aspect. This is evident from his gruesome appearance, marked by fleshy lips, the curled moustache, beard and a somewhat hooked nose.

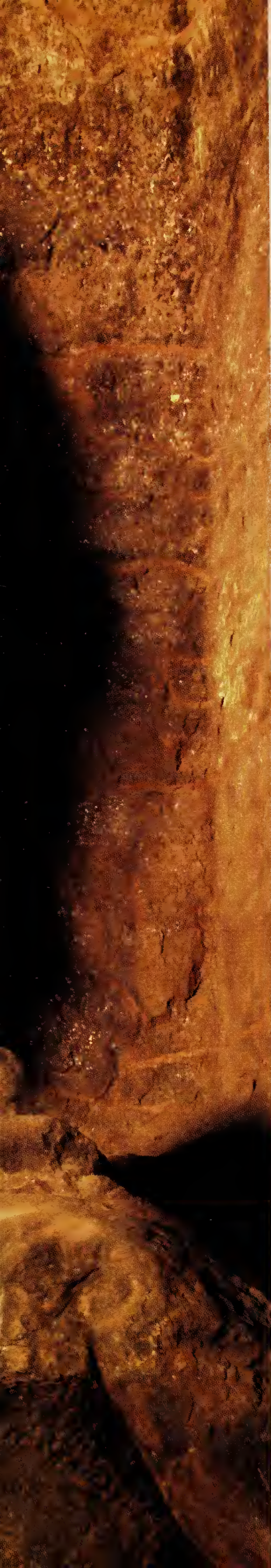


*Aghora*









It becomes more frightening by the skull in the headdress and the coiled cobra with its raised head. Being a form of Śiva he is also shown wearing *jaṭā-mukuta* from which the ringlets of hair are rolling down on the nape. This is the Aghora (wrathful) aspect of the god, indicating that he is the destroyer.

The third head, which is the god's left and right to the visitor, is marked by a blissful countenance, as in this aspect he is the Preserver of the Universe and is known as Vāmadeva. The sharp nose, and the eyes closed in deep meditation or trance are particularly notable. The handsome face is not much marred by small cracks as on the central face, and therefore appears luminous. His headdress is most artistic and fortunately its details are still clear. It is basically of the *jaṭā-mukuta* variety, with a very elaborate tiara (*ardhamukuta*) having a high gem studded crest at the front adorned with pearl tassels, and festoons. Pearl strings are also seen dangling from the top of the *jaṭā-mukuta*. The ear ornaments too have pearl pendants; the ear lobes are elongated (*pralamba-karṇa-pāśa*) because of wearing heavy ornaments. The face is fringed by ringlets



on the forehead (*chikuras*) which are peeping out from below the tiara. A bangle is seen on the left hand, holding a lotus.

It may be stated that the Sadāśiva form of the god has four heads which represent viz. Tatpurusha or Mahādeva (central head), Aghora or Bhairava (left head), Vāmadeva or Umā (right head), and Sadyojāta or Nandin, which being the fourth head, is at the back and could not be shown. But according to the *Vishṇu-dharmottara-purāṇa* and in the *Pāśupata* system, which is dominant at Elephanta, there are five heads viz. Sadyojāta, Tatpurusha, Vāmadeva, Īshāna and Aghora.

The visitor is overawed by the sheer grandeur of the colossus which represents the three different aspects of Śiva, the Supreme god. Each face has its own physiognomy, its own headdress and jewellery, but all three are bound together by their power which is sheer energy (*śāktika śārīra*). The central face, that of Tatpurusha, represents the Creator, and hence holds *mātulīṅga* or *bijapūraka*, meaning full of seeds (of the universe). Aghora is fierce, terrific, as the Destroyer, hence serpent and skull are his attributes; Vāmadeva is

handsome, holding a lotus. The *Maheśa-mūrti* is truly “a symbol and an image, *linga* and *mūrti* in one”.

The *Maheśa-mūrti* has been acclaimed as one of the grandest sculptures. Mulk Raj Anand, a noted art critic, writes: **“It can be claimed, without exaggeration or vainglory, that some of the greatest sculpture of all time also achieved in the Śaivite shrine of Gharapuri, and the main Maheśhamūrti is certainly one of the five or seven colossuses of world art, which witnesses to the highest flight of imagination and the skill of vertical man.”**

The giant bust is set in a recess which has broad squarish pilasters on either side on which is carved a guardian (*dvāra-pāla*) each with his attendant dwarf. They stand in a flexed posture, wear *jaṭā-mukuta*s with crests like those of the three heads, holding some indistinct object in the right hand, while the left rests over the head of a dwarf. The *dvārapāla* on the left is destroyed considerably below his chest while the right one's chest is damaged. They wear adequate jewellery and their faces are also calm with eyes half closed. Stylistically the *dvārapālas* are akin to the colossus.





*Gangadhara-Siva*

## 6. Gangādhara Śiva

On the left of the Trimūrti colossus and to the right of the visitor, on the back wall, there is a remarkable panel (8.10 x 3.90 m) narrating a very complex story of the descent of the Ganga, the most sacred river of India. According to the *Purāṇas*, there was in the ancient past a

king named Sagara who had two wives. To the first wife, Kashini, was born a son, named Asamanjasa, and 60,000 sons from the other wife, Sumati. Asamanjasa was a very wicked person from his childhood and his behaviour also affected the other brothers. They started behaving badly and it became unbearable for gods to



tolerate them. They asked Kapila, an aspect of Viṣṇu, as to what would be the fate of these children. He said they would perish.

Sagara decided to perform the horse sacrifice (*aśva-medha*) and set the horse loose. It was stolen by Indra who put it in the nether world (*pātāla loka*). The sons of Sagara, all sixty thousand, traced the foot prints of the horse into the *pātāla* where they found it in the hermitage of Kapila. They wanted to kill Kapila as they thought that he had stolen it, but the latter, with his superhuman power, reduced them to ashes. Sagara, after waiting for a long time, sent his grandson, Anshuman, the son of Asamanjasa, to search for the horse and his uncles. He found the horse in the *pātāla*, and it was returned to him by Kapila, who told him about his uncles' fate, but informed him that they would go to heaven if purified by the waters of Ganga which should be brought down from the heaven. Sagara performs the *aśvamedha*, and later dies. Anshuman's grandson, Bhagīratha, performs a penance for bringing down the Ganga from heaven, but the problem was who could resist her stream which was very forceful and would have shattered the earth. It is only

Śiva who could do it. He is satisfied by Bhagīratha's austerities and agrees. Moreover, he wanted to humble the pride of the river. He goes to the Himalayas, and made Ganga to wind through his matted locks for a long time. She then starts flowing in three streams and hence is known as *tri-pathagā*. The three heads of the river have been identified as Ganga moving through the three worlds viz. Mandakini, the world of gods, Bhagīrathi, the world of men and Bhogavatī, the underworld. Bhagīratha takes her to the ashes of his uncles and they become alive. Śiva is known as Gangādhara because he carried Ganga on his head.

In the panel Śiva and Pārvatī are of huge proportions but their forms are slender. Both stand in the triple flexed (*tri-bhanga*) posture. This is fortunately the only panel in which the lower parts of the bodies have survived, and so are other figures. The panel therefore is in a somewhat better state of preservation as compared to others. Śiva, inordinately tall (ht 4.80 m), is shown with four hands, but both the left hands are broken; of the right hands, the front one is held in the position of granting protection (*abhaya-mudrā*), the rear left holds his





matted lock out of which emanates a female figure, obviously representing the river Ganga. He wears the typical *jaṭā-mukūṭa* and

necklaces; the armlet is a snake which is clearly seen near the left hand and an elongated *yajñopavīta* (sacred thread).

Pārvatī too is standing in a flexed posture, wears adequate jewellery, and her hair is combed in a coiled knot of the *dhammilla* variety on the top of the head. On her left, near the shoulder is Viṣṇu on *garuḍa* (eagle) holding mace (*gadā*) and discus (*chakra*); and correspondingly on the other side near Śiva's right hand, Brahmā seen on his swans. Between Śiva and Pārvatī is a dwarf, one of the *gaṇas* of Śiva. Near Śiva's right foot is a seated figure who may be Bhagīratha of the Puranic story; he is shown in three dimensions as he is removed from the parent rock. Above Śiva's head, the three headed figure is certainly Ganga, the river, representing the three streams of the river or the three most sacred rivers of India : Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvati. Flanking her are male and female figures hovering in the sky.

To the left of the panel is an oblong cell (5.40 x 4.80 m), and a similar one on the opposite side, to the right of the *Ardhanārīśvara* panel. They may have been used by the priests of the shrine.





*Kalyana-sundara-murti*







## 7. Kalyāṇa-Sundara-mūrti

In the southwestern corner of the hall is the panel showing the Kalyāṇa-sundara-mūrti which depicts the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī. This also is a common theme in the Śaivite art, more particularly in South India. The story of the marriage of the god is quite interesting. According to it, Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa and consort of Śiva had died. At that time Tarakāśura, a demon, was causing trouble to gods and Brahmins. As the demon had become almost invincible because of the various boons he had obtained from Śiva himself, it was only Śiva who could annihilate him. Since Satī had died, Śiva had no consort, and he could therefore have no progeny. Gods therefore implored him to marry again. Satī was born to Himavant (Himalaya) as Pārvatī and was secretly nursing the desire to marry Śiva, and for this was performing austerities. It was Kāma, the god of love, who was approached by gods to entice Śiva and get him to agree to the marriage. Kāma tries and succeeds, and Śiva agrees to marry Pārvatī. But he wanted to test her steadfastness. He goes to her in the guise of an old, decrepit Brahmin, but she

was deeply absorbed in her austerities. He begs for food, and she asks him to go to the river to take bath. He does and starts shouting that he was caught by a crocodile so that she should come to help him. She comes but does not offer her hand which is reserved for Śiva only. Finally she yields, and saves him. Śiva then reveals his true form to her and the marriage is celebrated.

The panel depicting the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī is perhaps the finest of its class. It is in a slightly better state of preservation; only Śiva's right leg and Pārvatī's both legs below the knees are broken. The subtle modelling of her anatomy such as the narrow waist and the curved hip make her graceful. She looks more charming because of shyness suggested by her downcast eyes. The Lord ultimately yields to the coy charm of Pārvatī who has won him by performing severe austerities.

The main figure of Śiva is of gigantic proportions, about 3.30 m in height and Pārvatī too, though smaller than Śiva, is quite tall. Both are shown standing, Pārvatī to Śiva's right; Śiva holding the hand of the bride, but her both hands and Śiva's right are broken. Some other figures in



the panel are also mutilated, but still it is one of the finest sculptures testifying to the mastery of the ancient Indian sculptor, not only because of its colossal proportion, but for its lively expression and the delicacy.

Śiva is shown standing, has two arms, of which the left holds the tuft of his lower garment; the right hand is broken, but he was certainly holding the right hand of Pārvatī which is also broken. Śiva wears a tall *jaṭā-mukuta* with crests, a pearl necklace, large discs in the ear (*tāṭanka-chakra*), coiled bracelets (*sarpa-keyūra*), plain wristlets and the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*). His lower garment is secured by a waist band (*udara-bandha*).

The most noteworthy is the serene expression of Śiva, and the slightly bent head and the coyness of Pārvatī. She is standing in a flexed posture, wears a lower garment secured on the waist by a jewelled girdle (*mekhalā*). She wears an elaborate tiara, out of which ringlets are seen framing the face, and a necklace with a rosette shaped pendant which is seen dangling on the belly button. Her ear ornaments are also large discs of the *tāṭanka-chakra* variety. Such large discs of polished stone were

covered with gold foil and impressed with repousse pattern specimens of which have been found at ancient sites. Both Śiva and Pārvatī each have a halo (*prabhā-valaya*) at the back, indicating their divine status.

Many divinities are present at the wedding. To the left of Śiva, by the side of his left hand, is the four-headed Brahmā, shown seated. He officiated as the priest who solemnised the marriage.

Vishṇu, wearing his typical cylindrical headdress, is seen standing behind Brahmā and holds a discus (*chakra*) in his left hand.

Behind Pārvatī, the person standing is Himalaya, her father as he has held the right arm of Pārvatī with his right hand, suggesting that he is performing the *kanyā-dāna* ceremony in which the daughter bride is offered to the groom. On Pārvatī's right is a female fly whisk bearer (*chāmara-dhārīṇi*) holding a large dish with offerings, and behind her yet another person with a jar on head; the crescent on his head shows that he is moon the god (Chandra). Above, in the upper part of the panel are seen male and female figures hovering in the sky.





*Siva shrine*

## 8. Śiva shrine

In the hall of the cave the shrine of Śiva is located in the western half. It is squarish on plan with doors on all four sides which are guarded by giant guardians (*dvārapālas*) facing cardinal directions.







Each entrance is provided with a flight of six steps, and had in ancient times wooden doors as is evident from the sockets provided in them. The *dvārapālas* are of huge proportions about 4.5 m high; they are the tallest figures at Elephanta. They stand in a

slightly flexed position which makes them a little lively. All of them, except that on the south-east corner, have lost the portions of their bodies below the waist. Each *dvārapāla* has two hands, the left one resting on the thigh, while the right one is raised





*Siva shrine with dvarapalas*







and holds some indistinct object. This of course holds good in the case of the *dvārapāla* who is intact, in the case of others it is hard to make out because they are broken. All the *dvārapālas* are of slender proportions and not corpulent. Each of them wears an elaborate crown not much different from that of Śiva (*jaṭā-mukuta*), and a necklace, armlets and bracelets. Each wears a lower garment (*antariya*) secured on the waist by a jeweled girdle (*mekhalā*); it ends just below the knees and can be

identified as of the *ardhoruka* variety. Its tuft is held in the left hand. The sacred thread is probably composed of pearl strings (*muktā-yajñopavīta*). On the western side of the southern entrance, under the right arm of the *dvārapāla* are engraved two letters : 'Śiva', which are obviously much later in date.

In the sanctum sanctorum (*garbha-griha*), which has a severely plain interior, there is a Śiva-*linga*, fixed in the rock-cut pedestal. Its lower part is squarish in section and the upper is round; it is about

*Dvarapalas*





1 m high. The sockets provided at the corners of the basement indicate that some sort of awning was erected over the *linga* on special occasions. Even at present a fair is annually held on the '*Mahā-Śiva-rātri*' day when people gather in thousands for offering worship to the god.

It may be interesting to know as to when the *linga* worship came into vogue in India. It appears from the evidence of coins, particularly those of the Kushan king Wima Kadphises who ruled in the first century AD, that Śiva

was worshipped in the human form as the god is depicted on his coins standing with his bull. But slightly later, in the latter half of the first and early second century AD, the *mukha-linga* comes into being which consists of a phallus topped by a human face, which is that of Śiva. This practice is still in vogue as in many temples in India there is a metal mask of Śiva's face which is fitted over the phallus on special occasions. Thus there is evidence to demonstrate that the *linga* worship began in the early centuries of the Christian era.





## 9. Andhakāśura-vadha-mūrti

In the north-west corner of the hall, at the western end of the northern wall is the panel showing the Andhakāśura-

vadha-mūrti of Śiva in which he is depicted as annihilating the demon Andhaka. Before describing the panel it is desirable to know the Puranic story which describes it as an allegory representing the war





of spiritual knowledge. The story is divided into two parts according to which Siva first kills Gajāśura, a demon in the form of an elephant, who is a friend of Andhaka, and then the latter. In some of the

representations in South Indian art, sometimes the two stories are depicted separately, but elsewhere in the country both the legends are combined and are delineated in one panel.





In the rock-cut caves of Western India more particularly at Ellora, there are quite a few illustrations of the combined story.

According to the Puranic story Andhakāśura was said to have been born of a drop of sweat falling from Śiva's third eye, but later he became wicked when he grew up. He was ruling over the *asuras*, had practiced austerities for a long time and had obtained several boons from the god Brahmā, a member of the Hindu trinity, the other two being Śiva and Viṣṇu. He became potent with power and started harassing gods who then went to Kailāsa, the abode of Śiva, to complain. When Śiva was listening to their complaint, Andhaka came to Kailāsa with the evil intention of abducting Pārvatī, the consort of Śiva. Śiva recognized the danger because of his superior knowledge and decided to destroy the demon. He first made three big snakes Vāsuki, Takshaka and Dhananjaya-as his belt and bracelets. Precisely at this time another associate of Andhaka, named Nīla, appeared in the form of an elephant with the intention of killing Śiva. Nandi, Śiva's bull came to know about it and informed Virābhadrā, who then assumed the form of

a lion, the natural enemy of elephant, and killed him. Śiva then wore the skin of the elephant as his upper garment, and wounded Andhaka with an arrow. Śiva thrust his trident (*triśūla*) into

Andhaka's body and Viṣṇu destroyed other demons. But this created another problem. Andhaka had obtained a boon that he will be invincible because every drop of blood falling on the ground from his body will create another demon. Śiva therefore created a *śakti* - Yogeshvari-from the flame issuing out of his mouth and other gods sent their female counterparts (*śaktis*) viz. Brāhmī, Māheśvari, Kaumārī, Vaishṇavī, Vārāhī, Indrāṇī and Chāmuṇḍā, the seven mother goddesses (*saptamātrikās*) - who collected the blood drops falling from the demon's body in bowls. Thus Andhaka was defeated by Śiva.

The Andhakāśura-vadhāmūrti, a *samhāra-mūrti* of Śiva, an *ugra* form of the god, which though badly mutilated, is undoubtedly a masterpiece. If complete, it would have been the finest of its class. The huge central figure represents Śiva whose physiognomy deserves a close attention. The artist has succeeded in delineating the fierce, gruesome face, with



bulging eyes and the partly open mouth with projecting teeth. Added to this is the dynamic posture and the unbounded energy of the god. The diagonal thrust of the body, forces him to burst out of the artificial frame. His headdress has a skull set in the *jaṭā-mukuta* which also has a crescent. The god has eight hands of which only three have somehow survived, the remaining are missing from below the elbow. In one of the right hands is a sword, and another supported the elephant skin stretched above. Of the left hands, one has a trident (*triśūla*) which is thrust in the belly of the demon, and the other has a bowl for collecting the blood dripping from the demon's body; yet another supports the elephant's skin above. The god wears a gem studded necklace and an *ekāvalī* of pearls; the armlets have beaded pattern but the bracelets are plain. His lower garment is held in position by a jewelled girdle (*mekhalā*) and around the belly is tied a sash (*udara-bandha*).

There were a number of figures on the right and left of the central figure, but they have all been destroyed beyond recognition. Only the head of an elephant can be made out behind the sword of the god. He can be identified

as Gajāśura, who was a friend of demon Andhaka. Śiva kills him first and stretches his hide over his head. He is said to have worn the skin as his garment (*krittivāsa*) i.e. covered with skin.

In the uppermost part of the panel are a number of figures who appear to be devotees offering worship to the shrine in the centre which, in form, resembles a Buddhist *stūpa*, but seems more like a shrine with a Śiva-*linga* (phallus) in it. The devotees are couples (*mithunas*) who are bringing flower garlands for the worship of the *linga*. They are seen hovering in the sky and may therefore be Gandharvas and Vidyādharas. Fortunately they have survived in good condition probably because of the height at which they are carved.

## 10. Naṭarāja Śiva

On entering the cave through the northern portico, we see on the right the panel showing Śiva as Naṭarāja (Lord of dance). The main figure, as others in this cave, is of gigantic proportions, but is considerably damaged; the entire lower part is totally destroyed. Even the hands of Śiva are broken and almost all the figures are defaced. Yet they do not fail to impress



because of their sheer monumentality and artistic excellence.

The main figure represents Śiva as Naṭarāja in the dancing posture (ht 3.5 m). It appears that it was in a slightly better condition in 1873 when a couple of hands

of the central figure were intact. The god is shown standing in a flexed (*tribhanga*) posture as he is dancing, but the portion below the waist is completely destroyed. He has eight hands, all of them broken save one of the left hands, but its palm is also missing. One of the right hands holds

*Nataraja-Siva*





probably a battle axe (*paraśu*) which is topped by a cobra.

The god wears a *jaṭā-mukuta* with a crest which is gem-set. He also wears a toque (*grāiveyaka*) around the neck, ear pendants (*kuṇḍalas*) and plain bracelets. The face is much obliterated, but the eyes appear half closed in a trance.

The god is surrounded by attendants and devotees and even gods are seen in the sky. Near his right thigh is shown a dancing male figure which can be identified as that of Bhringī, an ardent devotee of Siva. On the left is another male, holding a drum of the *ūrdhvaka* (vertical) type.





Behind him is standing another person with a spear (*śakti*) who is none else than Kārttikeya, the elder son of Śiva. He wears a jewelled crown in which is seen a crescent and a human skull. Just above him is the younger son, Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed god, holding a battle axe (*paraśu*) in his right hand and the broken tusk in the left; his legs below the knees are broken. He is shown in such bold relief that he almost looks like floating in the air. The figure is relatively quite small as compared to others in the panel, and can be taken to represent child Gaṇeśa. To his left is a female whose head is broken. In the uppermost row, above Gaṇeśa, are two emaciated ascetics. Next to them is the



four headed Brahmā; his seat is being carried by five swans. He is four-armed, all broken, save the rear left in which he is seen holding a vessel.

Of the figures on Śiva's left, the standing female is that of Pārvatī (ht 2 m), but her head is mutilated, and arms and legs are all broken. Above her, is Viṣṇu riding an eagle (*garuḍa*), his mount, whose head is missing. The god holds his usual attributes, mace (*gadā*) and conch (*śankha*) in his hands. Indra, the chief of gods, is also seen with his elephant known as Airāvata which is seen above Pārvatī's left shoulder.

This panel showing Śiva as Nāṭarāja in a dancing posture is among the finest representations of the god as it is marked by tremendous force and dynamism. The composition is highly





imaginative, with the main figure in the centre and others surrounding him which have been disposed in such a manner as to maintain the balance properly. The weightless bodies of the gods hovering in the sky are particularly noteworthy. The panel truly represents the rhythm of the cosmos.

The panel is generally referred to as Naṭarāja Śiva, but it appears to depict the god dancing Tāṇḍava, the Dance of Destruction of the world. In the sculptures showing Śiva as Naṭarāja (the god of dance), usually his one leg is raised, but in the present panel, both the legs are broken and it is therefore difficult to identify. But since Pārvatī and other gods are also present, it appears more to represent the Tāṇḍava dance. The *tribhanga* (triple flexed) posture of the god suggests violent movements making him dynamic, but at the same time the face is calm and eyes are half closed. This contrast in one and the same image is worthy of high acclaim. It may also be mentioned that the *Śaiva Āgamas* describe 108 dancing postures of Śiva, and according to some scholars the Elephanta image represents the *lalita* variety.

The Tāṇḍava dance represents Śiva's five activities : *srīṣṭi* (creation, evolution), *sthiti* (preservation), *samhāra* (destruction), *tilobhāva* (illusion), and *anugraha* (grace, salvation).

## 11. Western wing

Behind the Śiva's shrine, and outside the western entrance, there is a rock-cut court. Further west is a small squarish shrine, with a pillared verandah at the front (8.10 x 4.6 m). There are two sculptured panels in this cave, both badly mutilated.

On the north wall or the right end wall of the portico, Śiva is shown seated on a lotus the stalk of which is supported by two figures, who may be cobra (*nāga*) kings. His left hand rests on the thigh and the right is slightly raised. The image with only two arms is a rarity, but it cannot be that of Lakulīśa, because the club (*laguḍa*), his distinguishing attribute is missing. He is attended by his devotees. There is a similar figure on the left and above it is shown Brahmā and some flying figures.

In the back wall of the verandah is a door leading to a squarish but smaller shrine containing a Śiva-linga. The entrance door is flanked by a



guardian (*dvārapāla*) each, with two fat figures above and two demons below at his feet. On the left is carved a panel depicting Śiva dancing the Tāṇḍava. He has six hands and three eyes, the third eye representing the god's supreme knowledge. He wears the usual *jaṭā-mukuta* which is embellished with a crescent. Of the three left hands, one is held in the position of granting a boon (*varada-mudrā*), the other is seen holding the tuft of his

lower garment, and the third holds some object which is not clear. The three right hands have been destroyed. To his right is a person shown seated near a plantain tree, and above in the sky is god Brahmā seated on a lotus which is being carried by swans. To the left of Brahmā is Yama on buffalo, the god of death. To the left of Śiva is probably Pārvatī, and above her is Indra on his elephant, Airāvata. Viṣṇu on eagle (*garuḍa*) is seen behind Indra;



Western wing





Western wing



he is four-armed of which one left hand holds a discus (*chakra*). All these figures are stylistically akin to those in the Main Cave, but have been considerably mutilated. They appear to have been carved slightly later, as the shrine itself does not seem to have been in the original plan.

To the south of the western court is a large rock-cut cistern (19.90 x 16.65 and 8.10 m deep). It was cleared of the debris in 1923-24 when a beautiful copper vessel, brass dishes and broken pottery was found. The copper vessel is engraved with an inscription dated AD 1068 . All these objects have been presently housed in the museum of the Asiatic Society of Mumbai in the Town Hall.

Both the wings, eastern and western, were added slightly





Western wing, shrine

later, probably in the seventh century AD.

## 12. Eastern wing

To the left of the eastern entrance to the main cave is another rock-cut shrine consisting of a squarish sanctum sanctorum (*garbhagriha*) with an attached hall (*maṇḍapa*) at the front. The hall is quite spacious (18.70 x 7.80 m) with chambers on either side. The plan is strikingly similar to that of Ellora Cave 21 (Ramesvara). In the sanctum is a stone *lingam* and is provided with a circumambulatory passage (*pradakṣiṇā-patha*). The entrance door to the shrine had some carving which has now perished. On either side of the passage is a huge guardian (*dvārapāla*),

standing with attendants, each having a third eye like that of Śiva, and four hands. They can therefore be identified as *Śiva-dvārapālas*. The *dvārapāla* on the left is very badly mutilated but that on the right is in a better state of preservation; his body below the knees is destroyed. He is shown standing with the right leg firmly planted and the left slightly flexed and looks very vigorous and alert. He has four hands, which is rare for a guardian. In the rear right hand is a battle axe (*paraśu*), around which is a cobra, the front right is a dwarf (*gaṇa*) on his left; the rear left wears the typical *jaṭā-mukuta* with the ringlets of hair arranged not only schematically but very artistically. He wears large discs in his ears, and a single-stringed necklace



(*ekāvali*); the armlets are simple coils, but the thick wristlets are gem-set. He has a sword tucked into the waist-band on left. There are flying figures above.

The shrine is squarish with a circumambulatory path around it. The entrance is guarded by a lion on either side, of which that on the

right has survived. The door frame is severely plain with only recessed jambs. Inside is a Śiva-*linga* on a square pedestal.

The elongated portico, which has pillars with cushion capitals, identical with those in the main cave, contains some sculptured panels. On the right wall (west wall) was





carved a large panel depicting the eight female divinities. They are the *mātrikās* (mothers), usually seven in number, but sometimes even eight are shown as in this panel. They are flanked by Vīrabhadra and Gaṇeśa. They are shown standing each with a child, and their emblems or mounts (*vāhanas*) on their pedestals. But the entire panel is so thoroughly

mutilated that only their outlines can be made out. It may be recalled that they are associated with Śiva in his battle with Andhakāśura; they collected the blood dripping from demon's body in bowls. The panel narrating this story is carved in the main cave.

On the south side wall of this chamber is carved a seated Gaṇeśa but his relief







*Eastern wing, hall*







*Eastern wing, Ganesa*





features are damaged. His elder brother Kārttikeya, who is depicted on the north wall, is in a slightly better condition. He is shown standing, with two arms, the right one holding a spear (*śakti*), his distinguishing attribute. His body below the knees is broken, and the face mutilated. He wears a jewelled crown, ear pendants and a single-stringed necklace (*ekāvali*) with a large central bead (*nāyaka-maṇi*) . His lower garment is held in position by a jewelled girdle (*mekhalā*) through which a pearl string is suspended. The armlets are broad and plain. There is a charming female attendant to his right. A small figure of Brahmā is seen by the side of Kārttikeya. There are more figures flanking the main image and above are shown flying figures in the corners.

There are traces of paintings on the ceiling of the cave indicating that originally it was adorned with murals as in the main cave.



*Eastern wing, shrine*



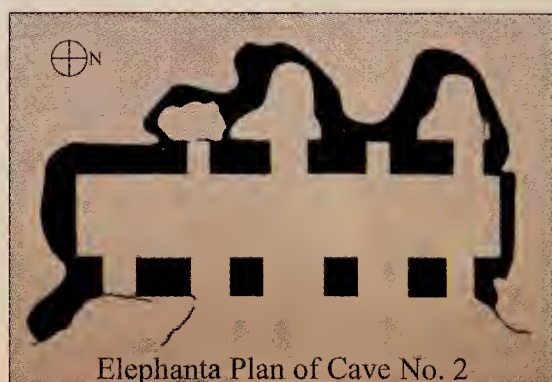
# Minor Caves



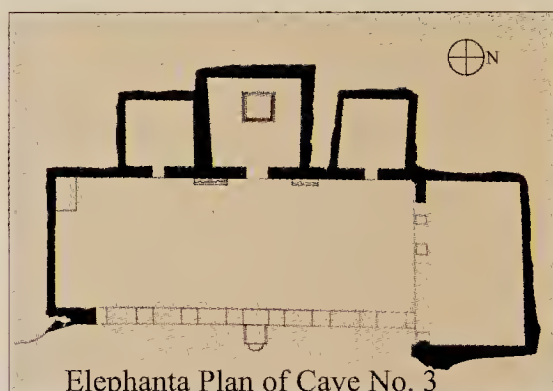
Cave No.2

In all there are seven caves at Elephanta but it is only the Main Cave which is profusely adorned with sculptures of great beauty. The remaining six caves do not have any carvings and three have not been completely finished. Cave Nos. 2,3,4 and 5 are located to the south-east of the main cave, not far from it.

**Cave 2** is situated close to the main cave. It consists of a portico with four pillars at the front and two small cells. It is unfinished.



Elephanta Plan of Cave No. 2



Elephanta Plan of Cave No. 3

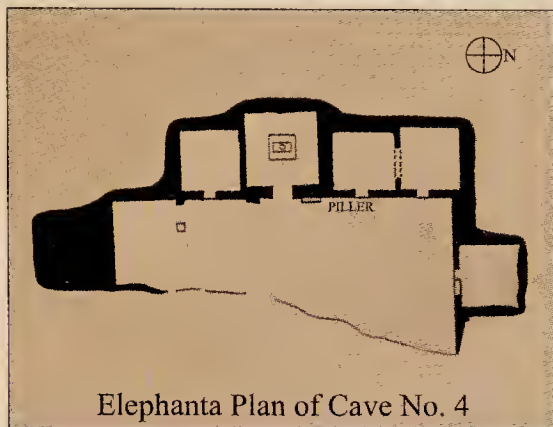
**Cave 3** is approached from the north. It consists of an oblong hall (9 m long) with six pillars dividing it into five bays, but the pillars are broken. In the back wall are three cells. A male figure with six arms has been carved on the lintel of the finely carved doorway; it has animal brackets and *dvārapālas* on either side. Inside is an altar.



Cave No.3



At the north end of the verandah is a chapel having four octagonal pillars at the front with cushion capitals.

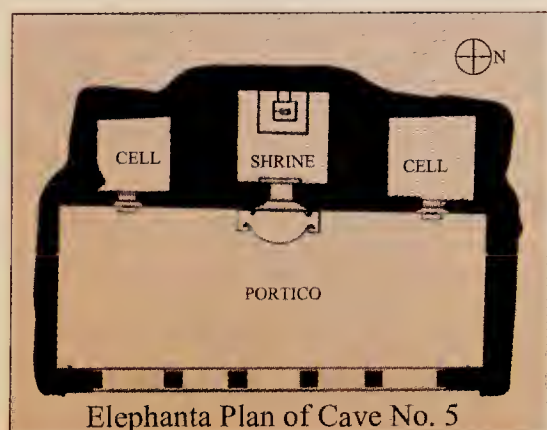


**Cave 4**, situated to the south of Cave 3, is similar to Cave 3 in plan but is in a bad state of preservation. It has a large verandah (15 m long) and a shrine containing a *lingam*. There was a *dvārapāla* flanking the doorway. In the back wall are three cells, and at either end of the verandah is a chapel.



Cave No.4

**Cave 5** is unfinished.



Elephanta Plan of Cave No. 5



Cave No.5

**Cave 6** is situated on the eastern hill across the ravine. It consists of three chambers with a portico. It was converted into a church by the Portuguese.



Cave No.6

**Cave 7**, not far from the above, is an unfinished excavation.

There are remains of a brick built Buddhist *stupa* nearby which may belong to *circa* second century BC. Around it are seven smaller *stūpas*, which may be votive.



Cave No.7



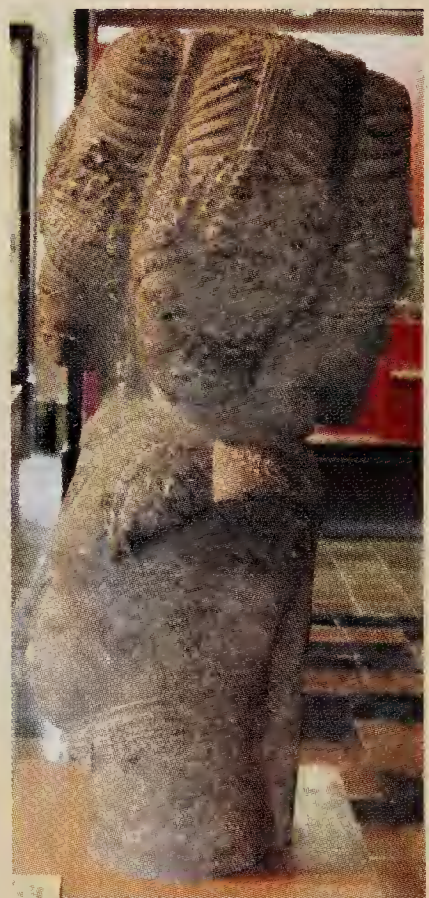
# Loose Sculptures



*The stone statue of the Elephant which stood at one of the entry points to the island*

It has already been mentioned that the island called Gharapuri came to be known as Elephanta because of a huge rock-cut elephant on the island, somewhere in the eastern side of the hill. It was seen by some visitors to the island in medieval times. It seems that the Portuguese tried their best to destroy it, and it was broken into pieces which were later brought to Mumbai and put together. Though badly mutilated, the huge elephant now stands in the Jijamata Udyan popularly known as Rani-cha Baug.

Some loose sculptures were also found at Elephanta which were collected and are now



preserved in the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum in Mumbai. Around the year 1905, some six stone sculptures were discovered below the ground in the Main Cave of which



one that is four headed, either Śiva or Brahmū. It was handed over to the Asiatic Society of Mumbai and the remaining five to the then Prince of Wales Museum, (now Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum) in 1921. The Brahmā image was also later transferred to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum. Of the remaining, there are three Viṣṇu images, one of Durga *Mahishamarddini*, and one *garuḍa*(eagle).



Of these six loose images, that of the four-headed figure has proved to be controversial so far as its identification is considered. Some scholars argue that it represents Śiva while others maintain that it is Brahmā. Although mutilated considerably, it is a sculpture of great beauty. Its hands are

broken from the shoulder and also the portion below the waist. All the four heads have elaborately jewelled crowns, above which projects the *jaṭā-mukuta*. The god wears a gem-studded necklace, a sacred thread composed of multiple pearl strings (*muktā-yajñopavita*), twisted into a cabled pattern, and a jewelled girdle. It is flat at the back. The image is a masterpiece which on stylistic grounds can be assigned to the sixth century AD. Recently an inscribed pedestal, found at Elephanta, has been said to be that of the figure. The inscription has been read by experts as mentioning “the consecration of Śiva image”. It is therefore highly likely that it was originally







installed in the sanctum of the main cave. The statue displays the extraordinary skill of the artist, so much so, that E.B. Havell, a noted art critic, compared it with the Hermes of Praxiteles, the greatest Greek sculptor.

The *Mahiṣhamarddini* Durgā image too is equally beautiful, even though its upper half is missing. She is shown twisting the neck of the buffalo demon whose agony is very skillfully

delineated in the eyes. The image also belongs to the sixth century AD.





# Site Museum

Recently the Archaeological Survey of India, in collaboration with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), New Delhi, has established a site museum opposite the ticket counter where a few loose sculptures found on the island have been displayed. Noteworthy among these is the head of Viṣṇu, as also standing images of Viṣṇu and Pārvatī.



The existence of loose sculptures on the island suggests that besides the rock-cut caves, there were also structural temples which seem to have been completely demolished during the colonial rule.





# Around Elephanta



*Chaitya cave, Kanheri*







## Kanheri caves

In the city of Mumbai there are a large number of rock-cut caves of which the most important and the earliest are those at Kanheri (ancient Krishnagiri ), located about 9 km from the Boriwali railway station. Here the work started from the second century AD and continued till about sixth century AD. The Buddhist establishment at the site appears to have been prosperous because of the busy trading port of Sopara where emperor Aśoka had built a Buddhist *stūpa* and also erected his edict.



Cave 2, Kanheri

Of the numerous caves at the site the most important is the apsidal *chaitya* (Cave 3) which belongs to the time of Yajñaśrī Sātakarnī (AD 163-85) as stated in the inscription. It is embellished with sculptures probably of donor couples. Cave 10 is a



Donor couples, Kanheri





*Chaitya shrine, Kanheri*



very large hall which was probably a dining hall as is evident from the raised platforms in it. Besides, there are a large number of rectangular caves which served as residences for the monks. Although the caves belong to the Hinayana faith, they continued to be occupied later when Buddha images were carved in some of them.



*Buddha, Kanheri Caves*





*Cave, Kondivate*

## Kondivate

The Buddhist caves at Kondivate, locally known as Mahakali Caves, are located in the suburb of Andheri, very close to the Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport. The Buddhist *chaitya* here consists of a double chamber in which the circular chamber containing the *stūpa* is attached to a rectangular hall. The cave can be assigned to the first century AD on the basis of the inscription in it. There are some more caves in the complex which belong to the sixth century AD.



*Buddha, Kondivate*

*Circular chamber, Kondivate*





## Jogeshwari

There are a few Hindu caves in Mumbai at Jogeshwari and Mandapesvara. The former consists of a large hall with a squarish shrine in the center containing a *Śiva-linga*. Stylistically, it is datable to the sixth century AD and is slightly earlier than the main cave at Elephanta. Its plan resembles that of Elephanta, the only difference being that the shrine in the latter is situated in the right half of the hall.



The cave has been excavated in fragile rock and is therefore in a dilapidated condition. It is presently known as the shrine of Durgā.



*Sculpture, Jogeshwari*

## Mandapesvara

The Mandapesvara Cave located in the suburb of Boriwali, of Mumbai is a shrine with a laterally extended hall, which is adorned with sculptures which were badly mutilated by the Portuguese rulers who had converted the cave into a church and named it Mount Poinser. Stylistically, the cave can be assigned to the sixth century AD, as it is almost identical with Cave 21 (Ramesvara) at Ellora in its plan and sculptural decoration.

## Ambarnath

The Śiva temple at Ambarnath (District Thane, Maharashtra) was built in AD 1060 during the reign of the Śilāhāra king Mummunirāja. It consists of a squarish shrine attached to the





*Siva Temple, Ambarnath*



*Sculptured panels, Ambarnath*





lozenge shaped hall by a narrow vestibule. The hall has four pillars in the middle forming a *ranga-maṇḍapa*.

The exterior walls of the temples have numerous offsets making its plan star shaped. They are profusely carved with elegant figures, sculpture and a host of motifs.





# Conservation at Elephanta

The Elephanta Caves are made up of closely jointed mass rock composition. The rock mass has several horizontal and vertical joints and plans that affect the behaviour of the rock mass i.e loosening and resultant rock falling. These joints make way for seepage also resulting in the rock falling.

The conservation of such Caves is multi-disciplinary. RCC is used in structural conservation wherein the rocks have weathered (damaged) and are missing. The missing pillars in the hall and facade are redone in RCC to support the huge overhanging rock mass. Short-creting and grouting are used to tackle geo-technical problems and this is done with the application of cement.

## **Problems**

The issues that are facing the Caves are:

1. Rock falling from the facade and rock mass.
2. Structural stability and stability of steep slopes.
3. Weathering action due to its location being in a very heavy rainfall zone.
4. Salt/saline action from sand borne sea wind due to its proximity to the sea.
5. Seepage of rain water.
6. Distress caused in the supporting mechanism.
7. Vegetation growth.

## **Previous Conservation Efforts**

From AD 1890 onwards, conservation was looked after by the PWD. In the year 1909, the Caves were declared as a protected monument. The public works Department, under the guidance of Sir John Marshal and Henry Cousens, did a commendable job in restoring the pillars and the facade of the Caves. Besides this, minor Caves were cleared off the trees and boulders which had fallen from the face of the cliff.



Mr. Rakhandas Banerjee, the then Archaeological Superintendent of Western Circle in the year 1921-22 carried out special repairs. He exposed the Nandi-vedi on the left side and the ancient original drain on the right side of Cave No.1. He also re-laid the steps that were built once by the PWD, as they were not in consonance with the original character of the Cave monument.

During the clearance of Cave No. 2 to 4, some fragment of images and a new Cave near Cave No. 4 were also discovered. In the same year, roadway from Cave No. 1 to 4 was laid and a footpath was constructed from Cave No.5 to 6. In the year 1923-24 in order to arrest the further crumbling of the rock, training walls of stone in lime were constructed and a stone drain was provided across the pathway leading to the caves beyond. Steps were also provided to divert the flow of rain water from the facade and the two side wings of main Cave at Elephanta. This was done to arrest further crumbling of the rock. In the next year, PWD attended the clearance work of water reservoir in the right wing of the main Cave which yielded an array of objects along with pottery items. Later Cave No.1, was terraced to prevent the rain water coming from the plinth of the monument.

After its declaration as a protected monument by the earstwhile British Government in the year 1909, there have been continuous efforts to preserve these Caves, in spite of the constant problems faced by the Survey.

1. Although in its early days the Caves were left on their own, in 1939 the work of arresting leakage were carried out by John Flames and Co. of Bombay.

2. Again in 1956-57, Cave No.1 was gunnited at the roof level with mass concrete and water proofing was carried out after removing loose



layers of weathered rock and exposing the relatively hard top rock. The hard top of the rock was also pressure grouted to seal the unseen sub-soil strains.

3. In 1959-67 the masonry pillars that had replaced the rock cut pillars were replaced by RCC pillars in Caves No.1 . From 1955-1960, similar RCC pillars were provided in the sub shrine east of the main Cave.

From 1975-1980, the work on the remaining wall from Cave 1 to Cave 4 were also attended to.

### **Recent conservation work**

1. Restoration of canopy in Cave No. 1.
2. Restoration of pillars where ever damaged so as to hold the overlying mass rock. Mumbai ASI Circle proposes to undertake the repair of the damaged portions of the pillars where the rusted reinforcement rods are exposed.
3. Provide a facade over the entrance leading to the western court of Cave No. 1 by using non-corrosive epoxy coated steel rods.
4. Amenities such as drinking water (by pumping out water from the cistern) and repairs to the existing toilets and pathways.

New signages have been installed.



# Select Bibliography



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Pramod Chandra, *A Guide to Elephanta Caves* (Bombay, 1957).

George Michell, *Elephanta*, (Mumbai, 2002).



# Practical Information

## Before coming to India

There are a few things you need to take care of before travelling to India.



### Visa

There are three kinds of visas for tourists.

**1. The 15-day single/double-entry transit visa.** This visa is valid for 30 days from the date of its issue.

**2. The 3-month multiple-entry visa.** This visa is valid for 90 days from the date of first entry into India, which must be within 30 days from the date of its issue.

**3. The 6-months multiple-entry visa.** This visa is valid for 180 days from the date of its issue, not from the date of entry into India.

### Visa extension

It is virtually impossible to get the 15-day or three-months visa extended. Only the six-month tourist visa can be extended. It can be quite a bother to extend it beyond a 15-day period. Avoid it unless there is an emergency.

A 15-day extension on the six-month visa is issued by the **Foreigners' Regional Registration Office (FRRO)** at any of the four metros: **Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, & Mumbai.**

The FRRO office is open on weekdays, 9.30 am to 1.30 pm and 2 pm to 4pm. A 15-day extension is given only if confirmed air tickets are not available. No fee is charged.

**Mumbai:** FRRO, Annexe-II Crawford Market (near Police Commissioner's Office)

Ph: 022-2262 1169

**New Delhi:** FRRO, East Block 8 Level-II, Sector-I R K Puram.  
Ph: 011-2671 1074



### What to wear

India does not have a fixed dress code, but it would be sensible to wear clothes that do not attract unnecessary attention. For travellers visiting in winter, woollens such as a cardigan and a windcheater are usually enough. If you happen to visit in the summer, wear loose cotton clothes and cover your head with a hat.



### Health

Your health during your travel in India depends on three things: precautions taken before arrival, day-to-day health care, and efficiency in tackling emergencies. For travel health, use your common sense and most importantly carry your own first-aid kit, after consulting a doctor. Especially take care of what you eat or drink. This is the most important health rule.

The tropical sun is extremely strong during the summer months, so guard against sun-stroke and dehydration.

It is advisable to immediately seek qualified medical advice in case any ailment persists for more than a couple of days.

### Hospitals

Indian cities have government as well as privately-run hospitals and nursing homes. The government hospitals have modern facilities, but due to a large turnout of patients, medical assistance is slow.





## Arriving by Air

The international airports at Mumbai provide the most convenient entry-point for the tourist travelling to the World Heritage site.

### Delhi

As the capital of India, Delhi has not only a well-serviced international airport but is also the obvious point from where to make connections for most parts of the country. Delhi airport is called the Indira Gandhi International Airport. It has two terminals: Terminal 1 (for domestic flights) Terminal 2 is 19 kms from the city centre at Connaught Place.

### Airport Enquiry: Domestic

Terminal Ph: 2567 5121 / 2567 5126

International Terminal: Ph: 2565 2011/2565 2021

### Mumbai

Earlier known as Bombay, it is extremely well connected by air and rail to most parts of the country. Mumbai airport has two terminals: the Chhatrapati Shiyaji Maharaja International Airport, 29 kms from the city centre at Nariman point, and the domestic terminal, some 6 kms from the international terminal.

### Airport enquiry

Domestic Terminal Ph: 2836 6500/2615 6600/2615 6009

International Terminal  
Ph: 2836 6700 / 2831 8888

## Airline Reservation

### Air India

1800 22 77 22

### Indian (Airlines)

1800 180 1407

### Kingfisher Airlines

1800 1800 101

1800 233-3131

0124 284 4700

022 6649 9393

080 4197 9797

020 2729 3036

### Jet Airways

3989 3333

### Air Deccan

3900 8888

### Air Sahara

1800 22 3020

1800 3030 3020

### IndiGo

1800 180 3838

### GoAir

1800 222 111



## Money

### Indian Currency

The Indian currency is called the Rupee. It is available in denominations of 1,000, 500, 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 2, and 1. One rupee equals 100 paise. Coins in common use are those of Rs. 5, Rs. 2, Re 1 and 50 and 25 paise. The 20, 10 and 5 paise coins have become redundant in the big cities, but they still have value in smaller towns and rural India.

### Credit Cards

Credit cards are becoming increasingly popular in urban areas. All major international credit cards are used, including Visa, Amex, Mastercard.

## STD Codes(Metros)

New Delhi 011

Mumbai 022

Kolkatta 033

Chennai 044



## Communication

### Post Offices

The metros offer a wide range of facilities, like telegraph, fax and a courier service, operating under



the brand name EMS - Speed Post. All post offices are open from 10 am to 5 pm, Monday to Saturday.



## Telephone

STD/ISD booths can be found in almost every town or village today. Most telephone booths remain open till midnight. Some of these also have facilities for sending and receiving fax messages.

### Pre-paid Telephone Cards

The state-run MTNL now also offers facilities for buying pre-paid STD/ISD cards, which the consumer can use to make long-distance calls from any ordinary phone. Cell-phone users can also buy pre-paid SIM cards from local network service providers to enable them to use their mobile phones in most Indian cities.

### Mobile Services

Mumbai and Delhi have an efficient Mobile services network. Popular service providers are MTNL, Airtel, Idea and Hutch.

### E-mail

Internet and e-mail access are easily available. There are many cyber cafes with broadband connections. You can access the Net for a nominal amount .



## Hotels in Mumbai

### Deluxe

Taj Mahal, The Resort, Hotel President, The Oberoi, Oberoi Towers, Sea Princess, The Retreat, Grand Maratha Sheraton.

### 5 Star

Centaur-Airport, Centaur-Juhu, Sun n Sand, Ramada Palm Grove, Holiday Inn, Searock Sheraton, Leela Kempinski, Marine Plaza, The Orchid.

### 4 Star

The Ambassador, Hotel Fariyas, Hotel Sands, Hotel Ritz, Quality Inn, Hotel Emerald.

### Budget

Hotel Heritage, Hotel Ajanta, Hotel City Point, Hotel Shalimar, Hotel Apollo, Hotel Citizen, Kohinoor-Continental, Hotel Horizon, Hotel Godwin, Hotel Midland.



## Car Rentals

There are several companies that operate car rental services in most Indian cities. For self-driven cars, the petrol cost is to be borne by the customer. A valid driving license, passport (for foreigners) or proof of address is required along with a security deposit.





## **Tourism offices**

### **Maharashtra Tourism**

C.D.O Hutments, opp L.I.C  
Building, Madame Cama Road,  
Mumbai - 400020

Tel: 22 2202 6713 /4627

Fax: 22 2285 2182

E-mail:

webmaster@maharashtratourism.  
gov.in

### **India Tourism, Mumbai**

123, M Karve Road,  
Opp.Churchgate,  
Mumbai-400 020, Maharashtra

Tel :022-2203 3144 / 45,

2207 4333 / 4

Fax: 022-2201 4496

E-mail : indiatourism@vsnl.com

Domestic Airport Counter:

022-2615 6920

Airport International Counter:

022-2832 5331

### **India Tourism, Delhi**

88 Janpath, New Delhi-110 001

Tel : 011-2371 1484, 2332 0005/8

Fax: 011-2332 0109

E-mail : goitodelhi@nic.in

Domestic Airport Counter

Tel : 011-2567 5296

Intl Airport Counter

Tel : 011-2569 1171

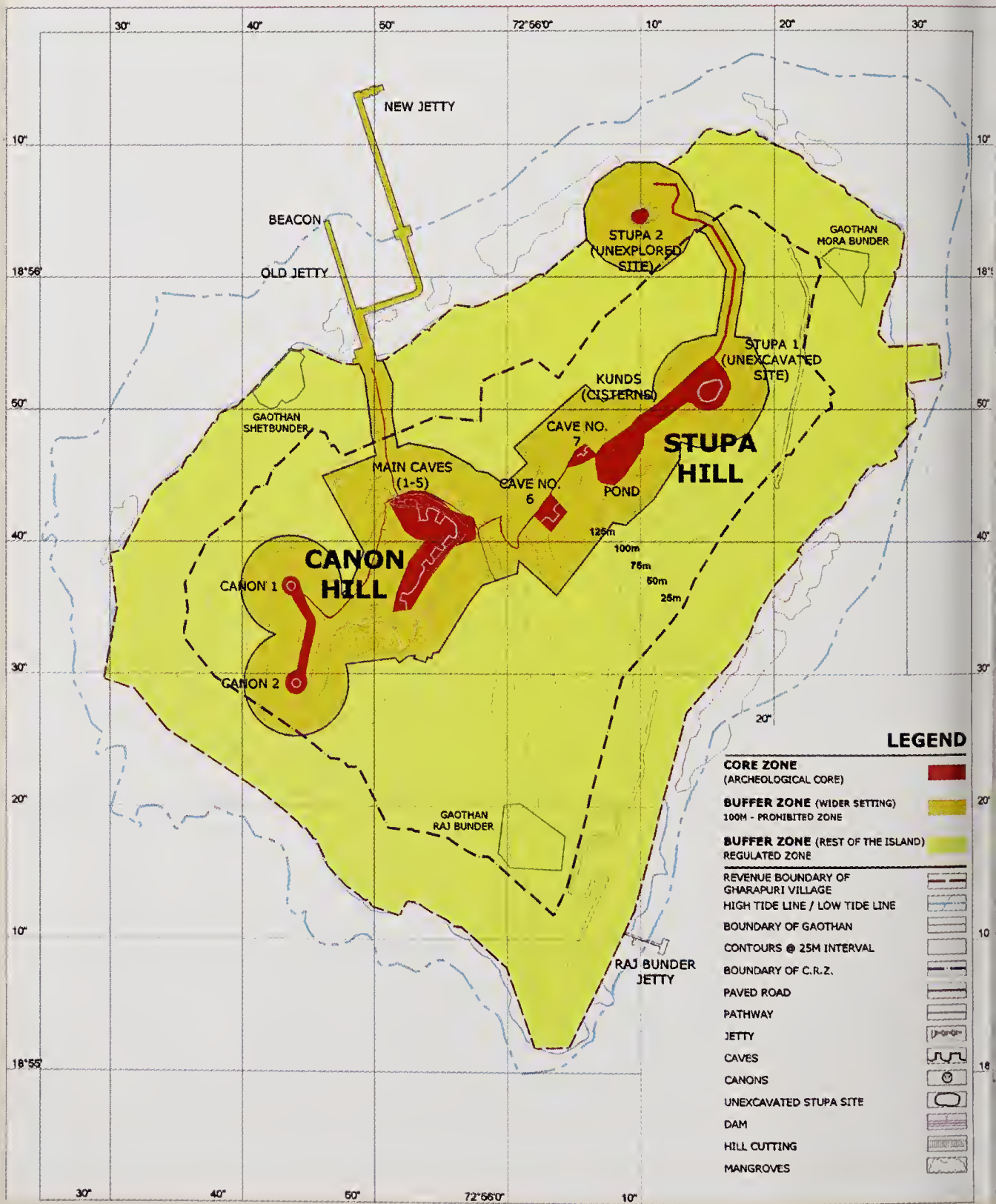




# Elephanta festival

The Elephanta festival celebrates classic music and dance forms in the month of February.

It is recognised as a hub of creative activity across the country.











ARABIAN  
SEA

Surya  
IIT COLO  
SAKI NAKA  
GHA

ANDHERI

VILLE  
PARLE

Juhu Beach: JUHUTARA

SANTA CRUZ

KHAR

BANDRA

KURLA

CHEMBUR

SION

MAHIM

WADALA

DADAR

WORLI

PAREL

Lower Parel

BYCULLA

MANDVI

Back Bay

FORT

COLABA

BUTCHER  
ISLAND

**LEGEND**

State Boundary

Major Roads

Other Roads

Railway

Rivers

**KHAR**

Major Localities

Naigaon

Other Localities

Places of Interest

Railway Station

Caves

Hotel

Institutes

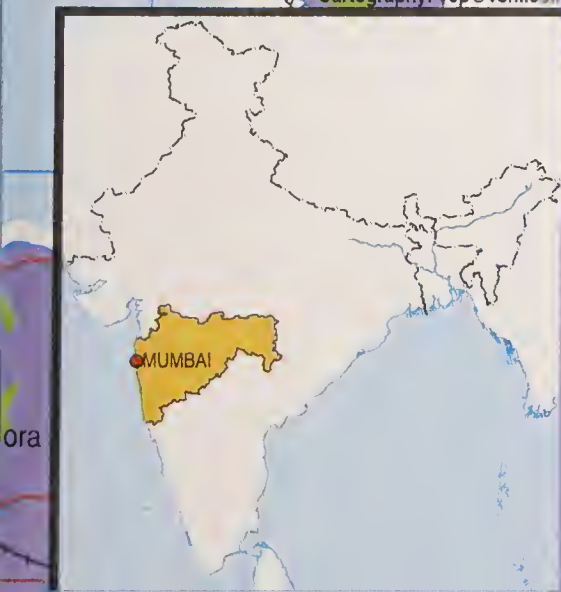
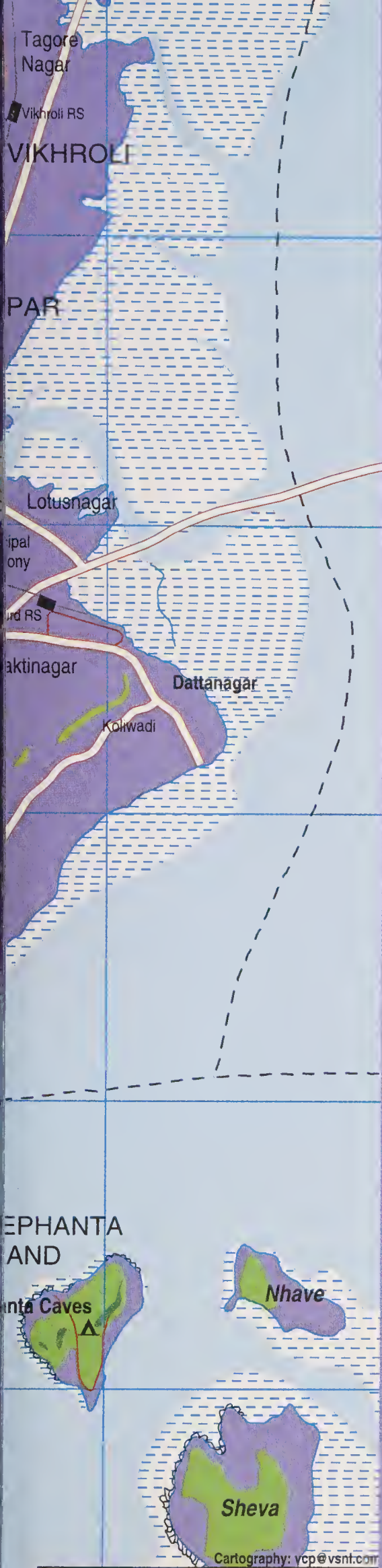
Temples

Churches

Mosques

Hospitals









ARABIAN  
SEA

ANDHERI

VILE  
PARLE

SANTA CRUZ

KHAR

BANDRA

MAHIM

MAHIM

WORLI

PAREL

CHINCHPOKLI

BYCULLA

MANDVI

GIRGAON

THAKURDWAR

KALBADEVI

FORT

COLABA

IIT COLO

SAKI NAKA

GHA

KURLA

CHEMBUR

WADALA

BUTCHER  
ISLAND

LEGEND

- State Boundary
- == Major Roads
- Other Roads
- Railway
- Rivers
- KHAR** Major Localities
- Naigaon** Other Localities
- Places of Interest
- Railway Station
- ▲ Caves
- ★ Hotel
- 🎓 Institutes
- ⛪ Temples
- ✙ Churches
- ✎ Mosques
- ⛶ Hospitals



*World Heritage Series*

# ELEPHANTA

Qutb Minar & Adjoining Monuments  
Humayun's Tomb & Adjacent monuments

Fatehpur Sikri

Khajuraho

Konarak

Sanchi

Ajanta

Old Goa

Mahabalipuram

Hampi

Ellora

Chola Temples

Pattadakal

Agra Fort

Taj Mahal

Champaner Pavagarh

Bhimbetka

## ASI Team

B R Mani, Arundhati Banerji,  
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